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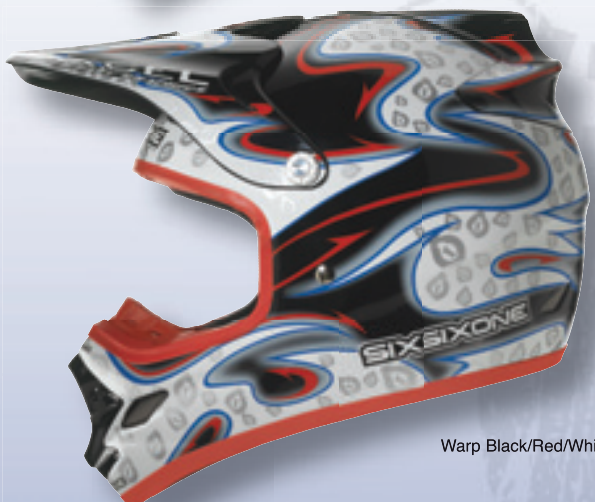
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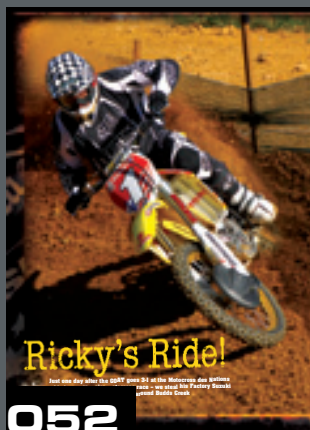
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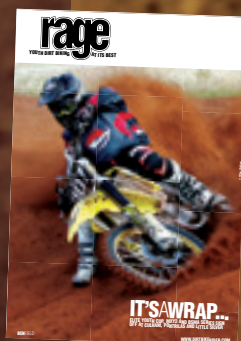
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November

2007

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COMMENT

SURPRISE, SURPRISE – Spain won the Trial des Nations and America won the Motocross des Nations. Hardly earth-shattering news to be honest – both started odds-on favourites and both comfortably confirmed their status as the two sports' leading countries. In fact, the only surprise was just how easily they dominated their respective des Nats. Spain's 32-mark win on the Isle of Man – including a completely clean opening lap – was a breathtaking achievement. But not as breathtaking as Team USA's who annihilated the rest of the world's best motocrossers to end the day on seven points – that's just one short of the best possible finish.

Fair enough, they had home advantage on a track prepared with American tastes in mind (see Radio America on page 95) but the GP riders' inability to rise to the occasion means there's a vast difference between this year's US victory and their victory last year when they failed to win a single moto. But you've got to look for positives and one thing that came out of Budds Creek was the fighting spirit the Brits and Irish carried across the Atlantic.

The writing was on the wall as early Saturday's practice session when James Noble spanned himself on a big downhill triple and dislocated his shoulder. But it's a testament to what riding for his country means to James that he made both starts on the Sunday, gritted his teeth and did some serious damage limitation. Noble by name...

Billy Mac also had to peel himself off the deck and Tommy Searle put in an awesome pair of rides to come home second MX2 rider overall – and that's despite being torpedoed by overweight Aussie Chunky Chad Reed. But the British hero of the weekend has got to be team manager Mark Eastwood. On the track – both back in his factory Honda days and even now, sticking his two-stroke Honda in among the top four-stroke men in the British championship – Easty was an inspiration. And it appears that off the track in his new role leading our national team he continues to inspire. At the pre-race press conference our team were relaxed and joking while everybody else were super-serious and that's down to having a team boss who's been there, done that and knows what makes his men tick. So well done Mark, well done Billy, Tommy and James – and well done the ACU for having the smarts to give Easty the job.

While Team GB's injury woes didn't kick off until the Saturday, Team Ireland's started much earlier – at Namur in fact when Gordon Crockard shattered his collarbone and effectively deselected himself from the Irish squad. In his absence, qualifying for Sunday's main event looked a big ask but with Marty Barr stepping into the Crock Star's size 12s they not only made the final they brought it home in a fighting 13th place.

While the British MXdN team's fifth place was a great result given the circumstances, our TdN finish of third was a big disappointment. As I've already stated, it would've taken a minor miracle to knock the Spanish off their perch but Dougie and the gang were gutted to lose second to Japan. Good job that our ladies squad – Becky Cook, Donna Fox and Maria Conway – reaffirmed their position as the world's number one feet-up females by retaining the TdN title they won a year ago in France.

Finally this month, turn straight – do it now! – to page 52 for the bike test of the century. It's the factory phwoar-stroke that everyone wanted to throw a leg over but we were the only British publication allowed to take Ricky Carmichael's RM-Z450 for a spin. And we did it the day after the MXdN. At Budds Creek. And Suttly binned it! Skills Dawg!

Sean



First race action from Budds Creek – Villopoto's already out of sight

BUDDS BITS!

Hot gossip fro the Motocross des Nations

SO IF you weren't one of the many British or Irish fans that travelled to Budds Creek what exactly did you miss? Well for starters the track at Budds Creek looked quite literally awesome as fans flocked in as early as the Wednesday before the race. With the surface well watered and ripped deep the place looked so neat and tidy it seemed a shame that any bikes would go out there and tear it up.

Mark Eastwood might just be the finest British Motocross des Nations team manager in the history of the British team – we salute you Easty!

Ricky Carmichael looked devastated after only finishing third in moto one behind Flyin' Ryan and Chubby Chad which killed Team USA's chances of posting a perfect score of seven. Still, eight's not such a bad score – especially when you consider the French were next on 34.

There were parties aplenty the evening after the race. There was bad news for groovers wanting to get it on at the Fox Racing party when they ran out of booze by nine o'clock.

Slowest team at the '07 des Nats were Iceland after Team China decided to stay in, erm, China. The Vikings finished a fighting 10th in the B-Final in their debut visit to the world's greatest motocross race (they should have taken Raggi – SL).

Winners of the B-Final and therefore last place qualifiers to the main event were the Brazilian team of Antonio Balbi, Da Silva Nunes and Matos Garcia who finished a fine 16th overall in the feature races.

Sexiest fan of the weekend was the rather delectable Welshman who spent it all wearing a rather sexy little red thong underneath his Welsh flag/sarong/thingamajig – wit woo! We're 99 per cent sure the same guy ended up in a trash can sometime on Sunday afternoon.

Not being the biggest fan of Bruce Springsteen's music, Suttly never realised just how scathingly unpatriotic the lyrics to Born in the USA actually are until our Stateside scribbler Steve Cox pointed it out. Look 'em up online and you'll see why we think it's kinda funny that around 25,000 rednecks were singing along to it in between chanting "USA! USA! USA!" – dumb Yanks!

Billy MacKenzie more than made up for an arm



"Ooooooooo!"

pump induced lackluster showing in his first moto by charging right to the end of the second race, almost snatching seventh on the line.

Ben Townley never got to go bar-to-bar with team-mate Ryan Villopoto after trashing himself in practice. He also trashed Pro Circuit owner Mitch Payton with an oversized cream cake at the THOR party on Sunday night. Good job you're headed to Honda, eh Ben?

There was nearly a riot on Friday morning when the amateur SX racers were told big track practice had been cancelled. When all the fuss had died down British battler Steven Clarke and Edward Allingham both went 1-1 to take the overall wins in their classes while our very own SuttDawg threw away a sure win in race one three corners from home when his 450 KTM 'cut-out'. The beer bellied bruiser eventually went 4-2 in the Over 30s class for third overall.

Ex-AMA supercross champ Chad Reed made no friends with British fans when he decided to take out teen sensation Tommy Searle in order to seal second spot during the opening MX1/MX2 race. The chunky Aussie was deservedly booed throughout the rest of the weekend and no doubt cried himself to sleep – after a hearty supper.

A lot of people in the airport on the way home were asking why Brad Anderson didn't step in when James Noble fudged up his shoulder during his first practice session. Well, the rules won't allow it for starters and Brad was back home in Tow Law anyway. James still stepped up and did his duty by staying out long enough to collect 32nd spot in the final race which saved the British team 18 points (a non-starter automatically collects 50). Even with a fully functioning Nobby it's unlikely the team would have finished higher than fourth anyway with the way things panned out so fifth is still a great result.

Martin Barr rode out of his skin all weekend and was unlucky not to finish much higher in his last major ride for Bike-It Dixon Yamaha. Barty will be team-mates with Shaun Simpson next year as he's headed for the Wulfsport KTM squad. No doubt Martin will be representing Team Ireland again in '08 when the 62nd edition of the race takes place at Moneyglass Demesne. We'll see you there!

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WIN! WIN! WIN!

SHEFFIELD SX TICKETS MUST BE WON

IF THE prospect of watching the likes of Tommy Searle, Mike Brown, Jeff Alessi, Jason Thomas and Carl Nunn bangin' bars and rubbin' plastics indoors floats yer boat then this year's Sheffield SX – at the Steel City's Hallam FM Arena on November 3 – is a shoe-in for a top night's entertainment.

And along with the above mentioned British and American aces expect a whole sack full of crazy Canadians including Colton Facciotti, Jean Sebastien Roy and Ryan Lockhart to be in the mix as the British Supercross Championship kicks off at its spiritual home.

We've teamed up with promoters Future West to offer five lucky readers a pair of tickets each and to be in with a shout of winning a set all you need to do is tell us which all-time supercross legend made his Yamaha debut at the Sheffield SX in '97?

- Was it
- A) Jeremy 'Showtime' McGrath
 - B) Bob 'Hurricane' Hannah
 - C) Ron 'Dogger' Lechien
 - D) Anthony 'Dogger' Sutton

Think you know the answer? All you need to do is write it down along with your name, address and a daytime contact number and send it to us at 'The answer's not D', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe LA4 4AG. Alternatively, you can always hook up to www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competition link. Entries close on October 26 with the first five correct entries drawn at random getting the tickets.

And if you don't fancy your chances of winning – but still fancy a night at Sheffield – you could do a lot worse than giving the box office a call on 0114 256 5656.

For full series info visit www.fwsx.com



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**On the cover: Ricky
Carmichael goes
3-1 as the Americans
retain the MXdN
(Sully)**

**Contents: Ryan
Villopoto, Ben Townley
and Josh Grant slug it
out at Glen Helen
(Sully)**

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CRUSTY DEMONS

Night of World Records DVDs

WIN!

IMAGINE EATING the world's biggest steak and kidney pudding¹ washed down by a pint of the world's strongest beer² while basking in the light of the world's largest tampon chandelier³. Then it's off to the boozer with the world's hottest woman⁴ before cramming 67 mates into a Mini Metro⁵ for the journey home! That's an amazing five world records in one night – sounds like a recipe for a good (if slightly irresponsible) time, eh?

Well it's bloody well not compared to the **Crusty Demons Night of World Records** which bust an amazing six world records on one night in front of 22,000 fans – and if you don't believe us we've got 10 copies of the DVD evidence to give away this month.

Starring the likes of Adam **Jones**, Blake 'Bilko' **Williams**, Trigger **Gumm**, Robbie **Madison**, Larry **Linkogle**, Seth **Enslow** and Mad Mike **Jones**, **Crusty Demons Night of World Records** is even better than a pub crawl around **Morecambe** on a wet night in **October** – believe us, we know!

To win a DVD all we want to know is the name of the **Crusty Demons of Dirt Tour** that's hitting the **UK** in **January**.

Is it **A) Unleash Hell**
B) Unleash the Beast
C) Number of the Beast
D) Iron Maiden's Greatest Hits

Think you know the answer? Then you've got two options. If you're an old-fashioned type then write it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and send it – along with your name, address and a daytime contact number – to us at **Dirt Bike Rider, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4AG**. More modern readers may prefer to hook up to our website at **www.dirtbikerider.com** where they should follow the competition link...

Entries close on **November 8** when the first 10 correct entries picked totally at random will each win a DVD.

¹ 84.5kg made in Wigan, Lancashire, by Holland Pies

² Incontinent Fox Brewery's Boss-Eyed Badger (an awe-inspiring 61 per cent proof)

³ <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/entertainment/4111376.stm>

⁴ Opinions vary so let's just say, at the moment, Angelina Jolie

⁵ Previous record 66 by some students somewhere

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WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

Six pairs of tickets up for grabs

TICKETS FOR Europe's biggest and bestest off-road only motorcycle show are on sale now – a massive three months before the four-day fest actually starts on Thursday **December 6** – and by buying pre-event tickets either online at www.dirtbikeshow.co.uk or by calling the ticket hotline on **0870 010 9019** you could save up to 20 per cent off the pay-on-the-door price!

The Dirt Bike Show held at **Stoneleigh Park**, near Coventry is something you definitely don't want to not see as all the major motorcycle and clothing manufacturers and aftermarket parts and accessory dealers will no doubt be in attendance along with plenty of pro riders, lovely ladies and other selected famous faces.

Advance tickets cost £12 for adults and £6 for youths with accompanied children under the age of six getting in for free – so young looking seven-year-olds should think about making a fake ID right now! For older folk who don't fancy splashing the cash on a ticket we've got good news – well for 12 of you at least – as we have **six pairs of VIP tickets** to give away right here.

All you have to do to get your hands on a pair is answer this easy question. Where will this year's **Dirt Bike Show** be held on December 6-9?

- Is it: **A)** Stoneleigh Park
B) Hawkstone Park
C) Jellystone Park
D) Donington Park

When you think you know the answer write it down along with your name, address and a daytime telephone number and send it to us at **DBR DBS** comp, DBR Magazine, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, LA4 4AG. Alternatively head online to www.dirtbikerider.com where you can also enter. The first six correct entries drawn by our resident artist on **November 8** will each win a pair.

BERCY'S BACK!

Paris' premier SX race rocks

THE 25TH edition of the Bercy Supercross runs this autumn on **November 9-11** and promises to be the most super supercross in the outstanding history of this truly awesome event. Riders entered so far include **Ricky Carmichael**, **Grant Langston**, **Andrew Short**, **Josh Grant**, **Seb Pourcel** and the entire **French MXdN team**, **Max Anstie** and a whole line-up of 85 class racers including world champ **Ken Roczen**.

Tickets for Saturday night are already sold out but there are some available for the Friday night and Sunday afternoon clashes from www.ticketnet.fr. Head online and book yours today because this race promises to go down in history as an all time classic!

TONYMOTO A GO-GO!

New SX track ready to rip up!

TONYMOTO, THE awesome motocross park that's situated next to the A34 near **Winchester** has introduced a new SX style track alongside its existing main motocross circuit.

After being given the chance to ride the new circuit for ourselves we're happy to report that you won't be disappointed if you turn up for a spin. Geared more towards intermediate to pro level riders the superbly laid out course has a mixture of split rhythm sections, sand sections, doubles and triples.

All this would normally add up to a pretty frightening prospect but this track manages to be rider friendly and inspires confidence which is a credit to its design. For more details give the track owner – whose name escapes us at the moment – a call on **07729 827981** or log on to his website www.tonymotomx.com.

GORDON CROCKARD

TV TIMES!

A BUSTED COLLARBONE KEEPS CROCKARD PLANTED RIGHT IN FRONT OF HIS PLASMA

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTY

BIG HELLO there! Reporting to you as a fan this month, more so than as a rider as I'm watching races mostly on the TV and not getting any track time in myself.

I was hoping that my injured collarbone would have been fixed in time for me to race the Motocross des Nations at Budds Creek. I had been training on the road bicycle and doing a little running to stay in shape in case my bones had healed enough for me to be able to take the risk of racing a motocross bike. I went for a scan on my shoulder a week before the MXdN and much to my disappointment it hadn't fully healed. Two areas of

the bone were not completely knitted and any impact would likely rebreak it so with that news I knew I was definitely not going to be riding the MXdN for Team Ireland. Gutted! I watched it on TV instead and was pumped at how Team Ireland performed – 13th overall is good given the company they were in so well done lads and all involved, I'm just sorry I wasn't riding too.

Moneyglass is confirmed for the MXdN next year and this is fantastic news for everyone involved in motocross in Ireland. An American dream team of **Ryan Villopoto**, **James Stewart** and hopefully **Ricky Carmichael** would be the ultimate to see on the Northern Ireland Events Company prepared circuit. Personally I propose that it should be as close to a real traditional Irish scramble track as possible. This of course to give the home team as big an advantage as they can get. Firstly, plant out the entire site with premium back and beyond windbush. Add rock and brambles where space allows then let a few sheep roam the land to get a path through the windbushes for track layout. Any old school Irish scrambles champions will know what type of track these conditions resemble and they and even I could name a few recent venues which still have these testing qualities!

For sure it's a massive task to host this type of event and some good staff will need to be at their best and take advice from the right people who have experience in world level motocross. I wish them the best of luck. I'm actually heading to Moneyglass this Saturday to watch an Ulster championship race – wish I was healed up and riding rather than watching.

Last Saturday I entered a cross-country mountain marathon for mountain bikes – it was 55km in total and I finished in a time of four hours, 51 minutes. For the first two hours I was feeling strong on the hills and pushing hard on the pedals.

Perhaps too hard as at the two-hour mark I got huge, huge cramp in my quadriceps (the muscles on the front of your legs). Full-on seizure! I was worried that the muscles might tear off the bone it was that bad. All I could do was lie down and focus on relaxing my legs until it cleared. This happened four times from then on and cost me so much time and places. My mistake was not carrying anti-cramp salt tablets with me but I'll know for next time.

So the MX1 world title stays in Belgium in **Steve Ramon's** trophy cabinet. A few people have commented on this but there's really nothing to say

other than he's the champion. He has no 'wow' factor or does anything too impressive but that isn't what wins titles – but being fast, fit and consistent does.

During my injury time I've been watching loads of races on TV – normally I haven't got the time – and the AMA series gets good coverage on Motors TV. It was good viewing and the tracks mostly look inviting. **Glen Helen** in particular looked mega and really got me thinking I'd love to race it. I've rode a lot of practice days there over the years for pre-season prep but never a race.

Any day over the winter if you want to find me you can easily reach me as I'll spend every day in the bar – more

specifically **Rocky's Sports Bar** in **The Odyssey** in Belfast. The owner has decked the entire bar out in sporting memorabilia and stood at one end of the bar is none other than the **Crock Star** himself! Full riding kit, helmet too! So I'm there every day so pop in and say hi! You may think I'm being rude by not saying hi back but it's just because I'm a dummy – a real dummy, not the sort you think I am!

Apart from being in the bar every day I've been using my time to work on my house and sort out everything I've never had time to do when I've been flat out with racing. The weather is still dry enough to get all the outside jobs done before the hateful winter comes in so productivity is high.

I have another scan arranged for my shoulder in a while so that will hopefully be the final one and I can get the all-clear to get on with dangerous sports again. MTB races, the odd trial and some Euro supercross is about the height of the excitement I have pencilled in once I'm 100 per cent clear my bones are strong. I won't be doing **Weston** as it's still too soon but hopefully I can be ready to ride the **Sheffield SX**!





KNIGHT MARE!

DK to defend Weston title

OFF-ROAD god – yes, god – David **Knight** has signed up to defend his **Weston Beach Race** title.

The Red Bull KTM star, currently leading the '07 **GNCC** championship, won last year and in the process handed out a very rare defeat to 10-time world MX champ Stefan **Everts**. The **Belgian** legend is back again for this year's blast on the **Somerset** sands at **Weston-super-Mare** but after retiring at the end of the '06 season may not be such a threat this time around.

Instead, newly-crowned MX1 champ Steve **Ramon** should step into **Everts'** shoes as **Knight's** main rival although it remains to be seen if the factory Suzuki man has the speed and stamina to challenge the off-road god (did we tell you that he was a god?) over three hours.

Kiwi Josh **Coppins** is also being touted as a starter when the race kicks off at High Noon on October 21 but the world championship pace-setter ended the MX season with a broken shoulder so a question mark must surely hang over his fitness. Former winner Paul **'Fast Eddy'** Edmondson is another likely podium challenger along with new British MX2 champ Mike **Brown**.

And don't forget to check-out Leukaemia Research rider Simon **Lees'** website at www.riderappeal4leukaemia.webden.co.uk and help him push his sponsorship total past the £2500 mark. For more general **Weston** stuff go to www.wbruk.com

'07 BEC

Overall standings

1	Tom Sagar (KTM)	148 points
2	Paul Edmondson (Suzuki)	134
3	Si Wakely (Husqvarna)	118
4	Euan McConnell (TM)	118
5	Daryl Bolter (Husqvarna)	111
6	Jason Thomas (Suzuki)	89
7	Greg Evans (KTM)	87
8	Ed Jones (KTM)	72
9	Paul Bolton (Honda)	52
10	Robert Jones (Yamaha)	35

TOM ON TOP!

Sagar lifts BEC crown

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

TOM SAGAR is the '07 British Enduro Champion. Claiming the title at the end of his first serious attempt the young KTM rider took over as the D3-Racing team's number one pilot when seven-time World Enduro Champion Juha **Salminen** put himself out of the series after topping the very wet opening round of the championship.

"With Juha racing in the British championship this season I certainly didn't think I'd be able to win," admits Tom, "but I started riding well in the world championship and continued my good results at rounds three and four. I had an okay lead in the championship going into the final round and just made sure I won the title. It's great to have won, especially as I wasn't expecting to at the start of the year."

Finishing as runner-up to Tom is four-time world champion Paul **Edmondson**. Having been racing in the BEC for half his life, Eddy proved this season that despite no longer committing to the championship as seriously as he used to do he's still more than capable of beating the majority of the series' youngsters, something he proved by winning both days of the final round aboard his Suzuki.

Picking up his first ever BEC win at round two of the championship, Husqvarna's Si Wakely ended the season tied on points with TM's Euan **McConnell**. With Si also claiming a European title, **McConnell** finished as the highest placed E3 class rider in the BEC having saved his best form for the second half of the series.

"I was a little slow to get going this season," admits Euan. "With the British championship starting in July several riders already had European and world championship races under their belts. Focusing on racing in the UK meant that I needed a race or two to get up to speed."

Winning his second Enduro 1 BEC title, Husqvarna's Daryl **Bolter** overcomes injury to come close to topping day one at the final round. Forced to miss round four with a broken collarbone, Bolter goes under the knife just 10 days before claiming Britain's second EEC title. "I crashed at the WEC in Slovakia and then one week later my collarbone finally broke," comments **Bolter** who had operations on both his back and wrist coming into '07.

"Thankfully the operation allowed me to win both the European and British championship titles which is amazing after such a disappointing season last year."



Knighter roasts to the '07 Weston win

Ollie shakes on the deal
with CCM's Austin Clews



OSS FOR CCM

BLACKBURN-BASED CCM have shopped locally for a rider to campaign their new CMX450 in next year's Maxxis MX1 championship.

Reading between the lines, **Bolton** teenager Oliver **Sandiford-Smith** – a former schoolie champ whose adult career has, so far, been hit by injury – hasn't actually ridden the bike yet but this hasn't dampened his enthusiasm for the project.

"This is a very exciting opportunity for me," reckons the 19-year-old. "The last few years have been difficult for me but now I'm really focussed on the task ahead. From what I have seen to date the new **CCM CMX450** has all the right ingredients to be very competitive. I can't wait to get the chance to throw my leg over one and see just how good it feels out on the track."



Revenge is sweet for Demaria

REVENGE!

A year on from his sacking, Yves Demaria pinches the world MX3 title for Yamaha from under KTM's nose...

Words and photo by Alex Hodgkinson

YVES DEMARIA spends all year playing catch-up but when it matters most the 35-year-old Frenchie is in the right place to snatch MX3 world title number three from Sven Breugelmans, the Belgian who split his run in 2005.

The KTM man wins the most motos but a dropped valve in **Switzerland** one week before the Italian finale opens the door for Yamaha's debut MX3 crown and KTM lose for the first time to the guy they sacked 12 months ago!

MX3 is big guys on big bikes but there is one exception. Bader **Manneh**, the most spritely 40-year-old on the planet, turns up at the **Faenza** finale with a 292cc KTM stroker and he doesn't just pull the holeshot, he pulls one of THE biggest holeshots of all time!

Final standings

MX3

1	Yves Demaria (Yamaha)	563 points
2	Sven Breugelmans (KTM)	526
3	Jussi Vehvilainen (Honda)	375
4	Kristof Salaets (Suzuki)	374
5	Alvaro Lozano (KTM)	368
6	Martin Zerava (Honda)	341
7	Saso Kragelj (Yamaha)	335
8	Christophe Martin (KTM)	260
9	Nicolai Hansen (Yamaha)	239
10	Jan Van Hastenberg (Honda)	205



REPLICA WINNER!

KEITH PARTRIDGE of Sittingbourne-based Suzuki specialists K&S Racing hands over a Ricky Carmichael RM250 replica to Silvia Mariani who came out ahead in our super summer comp to win the tip-top two-smoker

STEPHEN SWORD SWINGER!

WHILE HIS FOOT HEALS STEVIE'S BEEN OUT ON THE FAIRWAYS AND SMACKING HIS DRIVER ABOUT - POOR OLD HOT TUB!

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO BY KAWASAKI

ALL IS going well and once again I'm back in rehab – but not the kind of rehab that celebs end up in just in case you were thinking I've got problems! The broken bones in my foot have now healed up and the pins have been taken out so it's a case of building things up again. I'm well on my way to riding a bike again – I think a couple more weeks and then I'll start.

There's no big panic really to get back on the bike as the season has already come to an end. But my plan is to start riding to get a feel for things before I start my training programme in November.

We're probably going to have a holiday sometime this month – it's been two years since I last had one so it will be nice to get away before everything starts to get hectic again. Not sure where we are going yet but it'll definitely be somewhere with hot weather as we haven't had much of a summer over here this year. And people have been telling me that hot sun is good for healing.

I had the chance to pop up to Donington Park to watch the British Superbike Championship recently. Tim Elverson and I just went up on the Sunday morning – it was the first time I've been to a road race and I couldn't believe the amount of people who came to watch. I suppose I was comparing it with British championship motocross events where we don't quite get 20 to 30,000 people coming to watch. The racing looked good and with the championship not decided yet it should make for a great last round.

I didn't make it across to the MXdN but did watch it on Eurosport. Vilopoto was awesome – he made everyone else look pretty average. I mean you've got the best riders in the world there and he wins by half-a-lap. Okay, maybe not half-a-lap but you know what I mean. Great Britain done well I thought considering how much pain James Noble must have been in so well done lads!

Talking of James Noble, what a scrap he and Brad Anderson had at the last British! Jodie and I went to Pontillas to watch – you must be able to imagine by now how much I hate going to watch when I'm supposed to be riding. The racing was good in both classes and both championships went down to the last race – not something you want as a rider but great for the fans. It brought back a few memories from Polesworth in 2002 for me and I'm sure Billy Mac had a flashback as he went into Pontillas with an eight-point lead as he did back in '02 at Polesworth. But this time he did what he needed to do and came away with his first British title so well done Billy!

The other week four of us went to watch a live showing of A Question of Sport at the BBC TV centre in London. Jodie was the one who sorted out the tickets – we were sat in one night watching it on TV and I mentioned that I'd like to go and watch it being recorded. A few months later I was opening some mail and there were four tickets for the show. The guests were Andy and Jamie Murray (tennis), Robbie Keane (football) and a long distance runner whose name I've forgotten! The two captains were Matt Dawson and Jamie Rednapp and, of course, Sue Barker was asking the questions. It was really good fun with lots of jokes being cracked that they didn't show when it was broadcast. It would be great to think that motocross could make it on there someday but I can't see that happening anytime soon...

I've been out playing golf quite a bit lately. We had a few good weeks of weather so I was able to get out and I'm pumped with the way I'm hitting my driver (surely not Hot Tub – SL) at the moment. I bought it about eight years ago and it's only now I can hit it consistently. I mean consistently in the rough but let's not talk about that!

Handwritten signature: Stephen Sword #4



X on the Beach!

British freestyle warrior Chris Birch whips it real good as the distinctly unimaginatively titled Red Bull X Fighters Seaside Tour stops off at the Polish town of Pobierowo (try saying that after three litres of bison grass vodka although, come to think of it, that might help)...

Sequence: Antonow Wojtek





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WORDS BY STEVIE MILLS PHOTO BY SUTTY

BARR BANGIN'!

MARTY LOCKS HORNS WITH THE GOAT AT THE MXDN AS TEAM IRELAND UPHOLD THE HONOUR OF THE EMERALD ISLE

AGAINST THE odds it must be said Team Ireland earned the respect they deserve with 13th overall in the MX des Nations at Budds Creek. And this craicing (see what I did there?) result was in no small part down to the blossoming talent of a certain Martin Barr. That and the amount of 'on the pipe' green leprechauns that follow Team Ireland around the international race events.

Who was that little guy on the Suzuki that ran into the back of Marty anyway? Probably some wannabe Yank who was obviously running substandard brake pads, that's for sure. To be honest, it's starting to become scary – every time Blarney predicts the possibility of a 'showcase result' Barty Marr takes it on board and performs accordingly.

Seriously though, fair play to Martin, Wayne and Tommy – they all rode out of their skins to make the A Final. Come race day the boy did the business with seventh overall in the MX2 class – the next few years are looking exciting for Irish MX2 content. At the time of writing Martin's 2008 deal is not official, although it would not be a shock to see a Wulfsport orange coat in his cloakroom if the drums ring true.

Speaking of international team events, the Irish Under 21 squad of Graeme Irwin, Jason Garrett and two-stroke ace Stuart Edmonds are off to Holland – good luck boys.

At the moment there's so much happening and so little space (note to Ed – double page in 2008?) (note to Millsy – no bloody chance). Graeme Irwin scooped the MX2 British series against some class opposition. It was looking distinctly unlikely that the KTM-mounted Moto-One/Intouch supported rider would even make the start gate. A major get off in practice left the G-Man with a busted thumb but in typical motocross fashion he got the job done!

I'm sure many of the established UK teams will have been watching the youngster and perhaps have ideas that may include him in the future. But for 2008 I can see the Graeme and McC partnership developing which is not good news for his rivals. I don't know if it's a season in British MX2 or the European championships that will best mould his talent – that's for McC to work out.

Yet another Irish person to bring British championship silverware across the pond is Natalie Kane. Winning a British woman's adult title, Natalie also claimed second overall at the final Woman's World Cup race at Lierop – the Loughbrickland lass scoring enough points for ninth overall in the series. Is girl power returning to rule the roost in motocross?

Back at home GC is well on the mend and looking forward to some off-season European SX outings. Recently returned from his first ever non-MX-related European trip, the Crock Star enjoyed his holiday which also gave him some much needed recuperation and reflection time. So what's on the cards in '08 for Gordy? It's no secret that yellow machines have been mentioned regarding a GP campaign and there's also been some talk of going enduro racing. For my penny's worth, if the GP gig pays the bills with the possibility of a bonus on results it's worth considering.

Gordon Crockard is the biggest talent in MX ever to have come out of this evergreen, never-stops-raining country called Ireland. And as stated in Blarneys of old, I still think he has the desire to win at GP level. It is frustrating to read Gordon's lap times are as fast as the leaders' mid-race – at GP level it's all about the starts. Roll on March.

Talking of the future, the next generation of the Beattie motocross dynasty took to racing like a duck to water. Jake Beattie, aged 5, enjoyed his first grasstrack with the MCCNI club and finished fourth in his very first race – well done Jake. I can see a KTM Pro Senior on the Santa list Granddad Brian.

On a safety issue, congratulations must go to the Cookstown club who when running a recent charity event employed the services of a paramedic for the day. Our St Johns personnel do a wonderful job but I'm



MARTY BARR'S HAD HIS PICTURE IN BLARNEY MORE OFTEN THAN ADAM LYONS BUT WHO CARES? HE DESERVES IT!

sure having a qualified paramedic on hand takes a little pressure off their shoulders. A BIG thank you comes from Paul Kennedy who had the need of some personal attention from the paramedic in question.

Just one Ulster MX1 and one round of the Irish championship still to run and that's it for another season – see you at the races...

Stevie

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JONTY'S BOX

WORDS & PHOTO BY JONTY EDMUNDS

STAYING POWER!

PERSEVERANCE IS THE NAME OF THE GAME IF YOU WANT TO BE A WORLD CHAMPION AS MIKA AHOLA PROVED THIS SEASON AFTER 10 YEARS OF TRYING

FOR SOME riders winning almost seems easy. Forgetting about the hours of training, practising and preparation that goes into claiming a world title, for a fortunate few clocking up world championship after world championship almost becomes a habit. First one, then a second, possibly a third and a fourth while for a select group fifth, sixth and even seventh world titles help them become legends. For others careers are highlighted by one or two championship. For many great riders careers end having never enjoyed the sweet taste of success.

One rider that seemed destined never to win a world championship was Finn Mika Ahola. Coming just about as close as is humanly possible to winning without actually doing so in '02, Mika's finished one place away from becoming #1 no fewer than five times.

But this season things changed. Mika, after showing the world that he wasn't finished as a professional woods rider during '06 following two disappointing seasons in '05 and '04, not only found his form but found the best form of his career. Although starting the season thinking that he'd have a hard job beating defending class champion Samuli Aro and Frenchman Johnny Aubert, he emerged from the first half of the season in the championship driving seat. From that point on Mika never looked back and in mid-September he became the '07 E2 world champion.

In winning his first world championship title at the age of 33, some 10 years after claiming his first WEC day win and realising that he had what it took to be one of the world's best, Mika proved that maybe there is some truth in the old adage that the best things really do come to those that wait.

Mika admits that having finished as runner-up five times in the space of 10 years he himself wasn't sure if he would ever win. But rather than throwing in the towel and giving up on his championship aspirations Mika vowed to keep on trying. Winning a world championship on merit might not be possible any longer – or so he thought – 'but as long as I'm still racing anything can happen and one day, just maybe, I might get lucky and win a title by default' was Mika's take on what could happen at some point in time.

What Mika did this season was exactly the opposite of winning the title by default. Through consistency and continued strong results he won his first championship title by being the fastest. Where in past seasons things have gone astray for the three-time ISDE winner, in '07 he went from strength-to-strength while his closest rivals suffered bad luck and misfortune.

From the first round of the season Mika signalled his intentions. Claiming a 1-2 result in Sweden, Mika went on to score 2-3 in Spain followed by 2-2 results in Portugal. Then he claimed his first double podium topping result in longer than he can remember as he dominated the mid-season GP of Italy.

Winning both days at the first of this year's two North American rounds, Mika was no longer simply one of three riders that stood an equal chance of the title but the rider all others had to beat. Having not been the rider to beat for five long years Mika knew the '07 E2 title was his for the taking. Would he mess up under the weight of expectancy? Would an unforced error result in him finishing as bridesmaid once again? Or would Mika put his 10 years of experience to good use and finally clinch the world championship he deserved so much? While so many hoped that he would finally claim what he had worked so hard for since arriving on the world championship stage, doubts as to whether Mika actually would win still remained.

Mika didn't make any mistakes, rode with conviction during the penultimate round of the series and arrived at the final event of the championship comfortably ahead in the Enduro 2 class battle. Within

sight of making his career-long dream of becoming world champion a reality, Mika did exactly what he needed to do on day one of the final round of the series – he kept himself out of trouble and his machine in one piece and picked up more than enough of the points he needed.



MIKA AHOLA – CAMP POP PRINCE AND WORLD ENDURO CHAMPION

In doing so Mika finally achieved his goal of becoming a World Enduro Champion. Believing in himself when at times few others thought he was capable of delivering a title, he showed that he was right to keep on trying. Mika Ahola can finally call himself a world champion and few riders deserve that accolade more than the flying Finn.

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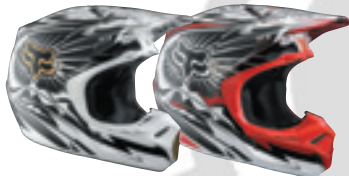
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TORA!TORA!TORA!

Honda prepare for an all-out assault on the 2008 MX season with a pair of much-modified fighting thoroughpurses

Words by Tony Marshall Photos by Ray Archer and Redeye

WITH A bike in their arsenal that's as dominant as the all-conquering CRF450 is it's little wonder that Honda have been daring enough to drop all the two-strokes from their range of full-size motocross bikes for 2008. Winning four of the last five British MX1 championships as well as a skittering of GPs and countless club and centre races, the bigger bore CRF is without doubt the stand-out model of the Honda range.

Of course, the 450's kid brother is no slouch either with 35-year-old Mike Brown taking one of the twin-pipers – albeit a highly modified one – to Honda's first major MX2 championship title since the CRF250 was unleashed in 2004 in the Maxxis British championships this year. While the 250 hasn't yet shared all the success of its beefier sibling, constant development work has created a bike that on paper at least is way better than its predecessor.

While the 2008 CRFs – and indeed their street-legal cousin the CRF250X (more about that later) – may not look much different to this year's offerings there are in fact quite a few changes and modifications lurking within.

Aside from the striking new graphics and works-style brake discs both motocross bikes have been fitted with Honda Progressive Steering Dampers which are safely hidden behind the front number board. Honda America have been testing the dampers since 2004 in AMA supercross and it's claimed that both bikes when fitted with the HPSD unit offer a higher level of front-end traction which results in a more planted feel in corners.

And because the damper also helps increase high speed stability Honda have been able to

change fork offset from 24 to 22mm – a modification most serious racers have been carrying out for years by fitting aftermarket triple clamps in order to get the CRF to turn sharper.

The 450 gets suspension mods too and a new tapered exhaust header pipe promises to improve low to mid-end power while a multi-map CDI system provides specific ignition maps for each of the five gears meaning optimum power and drive is delivered right through the range right up to the new RPM limit of 11,270!

While power has never really been an issue for the 450, the 250 has been seriously slated in the past for being way too slow especially when compared to powerhouse classmates like the KTM 250SX-F. Luckily the motor on the 250 has had a whole bunch of newness chucked in its direction for '08...

A new piston which increases the compression ratio from 12.9:1 to 13.1:1, new cylinder head porting, new lighter valve train components, a new exhaust as well as new cam timing promises to beef up the power output as well as the maximum RPM to 13,500. With maximum torque now found around 8,500 RPM it would appear that Honda have tried to create a livelier, harder revving motor to try and keep up with their competition.

One of Honda's biggest strengths over the years has been the quality of componentry and build. Honda CRFs come stock with Renthal 971 bend handlebars, decent grips, Dunlop 742A (front) and 756 (rear) tyres, a front brake disc guard and excellent dual-stage foam airfilters. It's very fair to say that you can take a Honda from the showroom floor, slap some numbers on and go race it the very next day – they're that solid!

For the past few years Honda's European launch has seemed to be on sand tracks which can make it hard to get a real feel for the power and handling of a bike especially when you're trying to ride 'em around Lierop the day after the Dutch GP! For the '08 launch Honda are a little kinder to us test riders and we have the pleasure of riding the new bikes around the awesome

British GP track at Donington Park.

With the big deal on the '08s being the steering damper I was a little disappointed not to be able to tell it was fitted when I turned the handlebars slowly to one side with the bike on a stand. However, shake the bars from side to side in a I'm-riding-a-500-two-stroke-on-a-rough-ass-track-and-getting-serious-amounts-of-tankslap stylee and you can really start to feel it.

Out on the track you never really notice that resistance but you can tell that the front end on both bikes feels way more planted in turns. That more planted feeling is down to the bike's new 22mm fork offset rather than the HPSP – it's not uncommon for bikes with such steep steering angles to handle like horse crap at high speed. The new Hondas don't and that's how I can be sure that the HPSP works.

There's little point going on about the shifting and braking characteristics – we're talking about Hondas here and the red brand has had those departments spot on for years. The riding position is equally as outstanding on both bikes and the handlebars have a good neutral bend.

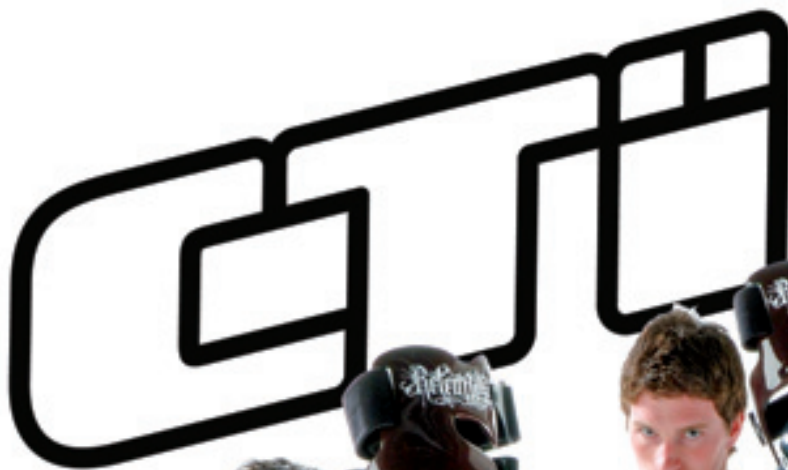
The suspension seems better on next year's bikes than it has done in the past. As the track got rougher nearer the end of the day and I got more confident on the jumps the suspension on both bikes felt sweeter and sweeter.

During my initial laps on the 250F the track was quite slippery and coming into some of the turns it felt like I was riding on marbles. Despite the dodgy conditions the bike handled superbly holding its line well wherever I put it.

There are some really big jumps on the Donington track with some seriously hard landings in store if you don't get them quite right. As you can guess I had quite a few heavy







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landings while I was dialing the jumps in but the suspension seemed to take it all quite well and didn't make me pay for any of my mistakes so all is good there.

The motor on the '08 250F seems less easy to over-rev than past models and even when I did rev the motor too hard the power didn't drop off as much as previous models have. The bottom-end seems better too – the bike is very responsive out of turns and the power feels stronger right through the range.

It's hardly a secret that 450 four-strokes have never been a bike I've put my name down to ride in a rush as I feel that I'm more of a 125 specialist. However, this new 450 Honda goes a long way towards changing the way I feel about them.

With the much sweeter handling and turning chassis and an even further improved power delivery this bike is by far the best Honda 450 ever built – and that's saying something. Thanks to the all-new multi-mapped ignition the engine

seems to respond exactly how I want it to and when I open the throttle quickly the engine responds instantaneously with a hard but very controllable burst of power.

For Honda to have improved the power delivery and handling package of what's already considered to be a very effective motocross weapon is quite amazing and if the other major manufacturers want to compete with Big Red then they'd best have something very special lined up.



SPECIFICATIONS

CRF250

Capacity:	249.4cc
Bore and stroke:	78mm x 52.2mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	40mm Keihin FCR
Front suspension:	47mm USD Showa (315mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Pro-Link/Showa (313mm)
Front brake:	240mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1477mm
Seat height:	965mm
Kerb weight:	101.2kg
Kerb weight:	109kg

CRF450

Capacity:	449cc
Bore and stroke:	96mm x 62.1mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	41mm Keihin FCR
Front suspension:	47mm USD Showa (315mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Pro-Link/Showa (320mm)
Front brake:	240mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1489mm
Seat height:	955mm
Kerb weight:	109kg



LITTLE WONDER!

Our big, daft Irish test rider swings his leg over the smaller, smarter 250X and finds it very much to his liking...

Words by Geoff Walker

IF IT'S fun you are after you cannot go far wrong with an '08 CRF 250 X. This little bike turns well, runs well, provides miles of smiles and if treated with a little care and minimal maintenance should never let you down. The '08 model isn't really different to the '07 model but why change something for the sake of it?

The CRFX doesn't claim any prizes for amazing power or world beating handling but what it does do is everything well. The CRFX makes super-smooth, non-aggressive power which has become slightly more lively each year since its launch. The handling is soft and supple through the Showa units and never misbehaves as the internal workings allow the fork and shock to work in harmony and the soft setting excels over tight, technical, rooty and rocky going.

With the soft power, long days in the saddle would be reachable for riders who are finding their feet in off-road. All round good manners and nature make this bike a winner for all levels of riders except maybe pros in its stock form. As with all of the Honda range the quality of fixings and materials used in manufacture are second to none. The fixtures and fittings really are superior to all other manufacturers'.

Each nut and bolt is strong and life expectancy on fasteners and their threads is high. Having worked on a few of these before, the rear linkage and headstock can always do with some extra greasing before you get into too many Welsh bogs but, to be fair, that is the case with most bikes out of the crate. The electric start and strong battery are a bonus with the Honda as it will keep cranking the motor for many rides between charges and blown fuses just don't seem to occur with the Honda. Brakes, levers and all controls have a great feel to them and the quality again shines through in these areas of the bike.

The air filter is too tightly squeezed into the airbox but on the other hand the airbox sealing is excellent as Honda have a really top quality door system on the airbox which seals tightly to keep the filter in good nick for longer periods.

The ride on the bike has never failed to make me smile as any bike which behaves as well as this can inspire confidence in technical riding and improve your riding style and fitness. Basically with the little Honda making life easy for its pilot, improvements can be made in technique and ability will be improved all round in all types of terrain.

The only change I made on the day of the test was with the forks. The front end was under working slightly as the rebound was a little fast which made some corner entries a little shady. The forks were slowed down four clicks and DC pushed the forks through a further 5mm in the clamps to help with turning. This transformed the bike in the tight technical loop which was used for the test as it ate every twist and turn faster and more positively.

To sum up the '08 CRF 250 X I would have to say this bike is solid in its build and performance so any rider looking for that quality and longevity with an awesomely easy ride should opt for this little barrel of fun...

SPECIFICATIONS

CRF250X

Capacity:	249.4cc
Bore and stroke:	78mm x 52.2mm
Transmission:	Five-speed
Carburettor:	37mm Keihin FCR
Front suspension:	47mm USD Showa (280mm travel)
Rear suspension:	Pro-Link/Showa (312mm)
Front brake:	240mm disc
Rear brake:	240mm disc
Wheelbase:	1481mm
Seat height:	958mm
Kerb weight:	114.8kg





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Tommy Searle will start the '08 season as Britain's best hope for a world title since Dobby did the business in '01...



ONWARDS AND UPWARDS

Tommy Searle went into the '07 season hoping for a few MX2 world championship podiums – he ended the year second in the series, took three moto wins and secured his first GP overall. And he's aiming even higher in '08...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

HE'S THE brightest light on the UK motocross horizon in decades and Tommy Searle has rattled off 10 podiums, three moto wins and a GP overall on home soil in only his second full year on the world stage. And he's also a cracking lad who still has both feet on the ground!

"It's been a good year. I wanted some podiums but as soon as I got the first one I wanted to keep on doing it all year. And I've done that. Also a couple of guys got injured so it's moved me up in the championship. It just feels as though it's come unexpected and I haven't had to work for it so much but I've been there every week getting the results so I think I've deserved it."

So did the 18-year-old set his sights lower on purpose to avoid disappointment? "I guess so. Last year I didn't want the pressure. I wanted to get a few podiums but I didn't want to say it because they think you're big-headed and, if you don't get 'em straight away, it puts pressure on. But I just kept going, getting the results first. And I've done the same this year."

"I was really nervous at Donington. Not the first race so much. I think I rode well, I just made a few mistakes. I needed to pull higher gears and I would have beaten Aubin. But after I got a good start in the second race and he was back I wasn't worried. I knew this was my chance of my first overall and I just didn't ride how I can do."

"When Tarroux came alongside me I knew it was for the overall so I put a quick lap in and set my fastest laps by a second-and-a-half to drop him. Those were the only laps of the race where I rode how I should ride.

"There were two sides to Donington. There was the plus side of the crowd supporting you but there is also the downside of more pressure. But hopefully I have learnt to deal with that now. I was putting myself under more pressure because I was looking for that first GP win. I should have won Namur, I shouldn't have let Cairoli past in Ireland and it had been building. It was like 'am I ever going to get this win?' but now I've got that out of the way. It was an unreal feeling with everyone there. On the last lap all the airhorns were going. That was a good feeling."

So he can forget all about the disappointment of Ireland now? "I just thought I'd won Ireland too soon. I know Cairoli came from a long way back but we were alongside each other in turn one. I came through fast on the first lap and he got stuck in the pack so it would have been a good race to win. Sure he crashed but it wasn't like he had been knocked off at the first turn and doing it on the first lap and staying on two wheels is all part of it too.

"I didn't really ease up but when I started the last lap three-and-a-half seconds in front I thought there was no way he was going to catch me. Then all of a sudden he was there and I messed up. I didn't realise just how close he was when I railed the outside line to take the jump, it was unexpected when he suddenly came across. But it was another part of the learning process. I won't give a chance like that again."

Tommy learns quickly and never makes the same mistake twice. Last year he pushed too hard in the first moto in Portugal and paid for it at the end but he came out two hours later, paced himself and moved forward. Then there was the way Tommy saw off Pourcel in Czecho.

"I do learn quickly. He was a bit faster than me in Czecho and caught me up. He's passed me a couple of times on the last lap this year – in Japan and the heat race in France – and I wasn't going to let it happen again. It wasn't an easy track to pass in Czecho so I slowed on the parts he couldn't pass and made him think I was tired and it would be easy. He slowed to the same pace but then I managed to up my pace

on the last two laps and he couldn't follow. I can do that, just turn it up. I train to be able to do it. If I need to go a little bit faster I can.

"I've learnt a lot in the last two years but for sure there is still plenty more to learn. I just have to make mistakes and learn from them but hopefully I don't have to make many more and I'll have got it sorted. I like to think I don't make the same mistakes time and again. I hope not anyway."

Does it needle Tommy that he didn't have to beat Cairoli to win at Donington? "I would rather he had been in my class. I knew it would be hard to beat him but without him everyone was saying it would be easy for me and that just increased the pressure straight away. But I'm kinda glad he wasn't there now because I got that win. And a win is a win. There are 29 other guys on the line and you still have to beat all of them. I just beat the people I had to beat."

After his first full season on the Red Bull KTM, Tommy's shown himself to be a GP winner but at times he still doesn't look totally at home on the Austrian 250F.

"I just need to relax more and I think the style will come with time on the bike. Last year I was having more fun on the bike but also this year it's definitely got better. For sure it's a little bit the change of bike but I'm going faster this year and the pressure was on me. I flow in practice, I just have to make myself do it at the races.

"There were times in practice at Donington when I was flowing more and when I practice during the week I'm a different rider. I think I will have got over that next year and I'll be ready for it. I have grown a couple of inches in the last year but I don't think I'm too big for the bike. Kirk Gibbons trains me and it helps me a lot in the races. I can go that extra bit because we train so hard. He always explains why we are doing this or that in training and he has also been training Billy [MacKenzie] lately and that's been helping him too.

"Kirk explains everything – he knows, he's been around a long time, done a lot of stuff and because I'm so skinny and don't have any weight he has to direct me. Sometimes Jamie will say 'come on, let's go cycling' but Kirk says 'no, that's just fat-burning' and I don't need that. And there are times when he tells me to rest. We work really hard but I normally take a couple of days off just before the race and then I feel





Flashing a gang sign in da hood
with homey Billy Mac!

DOUBLE ACT

The Ant and Dec of MX?



Billy MacKenzie was chilling out in the RDH Kentucky as Tommy chatted. And there's no way Billy could stay silent for half-an-hour.

Billy: "It's much more relaxed when you've got someone to train with. Instead of it being work, it's more fun. You've got someone to compete against and you've got someone to spot on the track so it's not like you're in the mode and get bored, just riding round. We've both got someone to compete with, someone to have a laugh with. Most of the time when we are training together we are sharing jokes so it makes training much more fun."

"We built a big jump and after we'd done what we needed to one day we each did about 200 jumps. When Tommy does a whip I want to do it bigger, then he wants to do it bigger again, then you try something different and that's the way to improve. If you're just doing it yourself all day you get somewhere where you're happy with it but because he was doing it better I wanted to do it better and we push each other on."

Tommy: "But I ended up doing it better. And then he crashed."

Billy: "We've got that on video."

Tommy: "It has been really good. Billy's been there while Jamie was away so it worked out as a fun three weeks. And it's worked out really good because I've had really good results in that time. Namur, Ireland, Donington – they've all been good races for me."

And they cleared up Marco Melandri's house before they left of course. Right!





Way of Life!



Steve Ramon

RM Z450



**MX-1 WORLD
CHAMPION**



DOBBY LANGUAGE!

Searle speak

"I know I can win if I get good start. I get holeshot and I win moto."

Tommy, how come you speak English like a foreigner at the press conferences?

"Do I? I guess it comes from talking to the Italians and all of 'em. Dobby does it all the time. Have you heard him? So I do it as well."

You're not going to end up like Dobby, are you? (Gulps) "Hope not!"



Tommy still feels he's adapting to the KTM - "I just need to relax more and I think the style will come with time on the bike"

really good on race day."

One question lots of Tommy's former youth rivals must be asking themselves is why he's made it when so many other UK schoolboys don't carry through their potential?

"I used to battle with Ray Rowson in schoolboys and he was beating me the last year, then I went up to the adults and he stayed down. All of a sudden I left him behind and I'm improving every year. He has too but he's been a step behind. I guess it takes longer for some people and maybe they will get there in the end."

"I think I've just been lucky and had the right people around me and maybe they haven't. But I have also been lucky that I haven't had too many people around me pulling me in different directions. Stefan helps me at the race but not during the week. I listen to Kirk and Jamie, then I go out and ride as fast as I can. I've been riding with Billy lately and Kirk's been there every day. It's been working well. We've just been having fun the last month, that's been really good."

If you want an example of how Tommy's improved in '07 both results wise and in his attitude you need look no further than Namur.

"I hit a tree there last year and I was still just thinking about surviving the weekend going into Sunday. Kirk had said before I set off that I just had to make sure I came through the weekend safe. I hated the track, I just didn't get on with it



on Saturday in qualifying.

"But I went round the track with Billy after he got pole and I came out Sunday morning riding smooth, pulling high gears. It worked and I went in the first race and did the same. It was just so easy all of a sudden. Rui [Goncalves] came past, I passed him back and just rode seven seconds in front easily all race. The second race I got a

bad start and went back to revving it, trying to go faster and it didn't work."

In '08 Tommy will start his world championship campaign as a genuine contender but if he's going to take the title he's going to have to deal with red hot favourite - and defending champ - Antonio Cairoli plus a sprinkling of other super-fast 250F pilots.



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"It's going to be the same as this year but Aubin and those guys are going to be working hard too so I need to have a good winter and come into it on top of my game. I need to be ready to race and be as fit as I ever have been. I need to race. Once I set my pace I can do it every single lap and be on it the entire race."

"There's no reason why I should be scared of Cairoli. I started this year two seconds down on them, cut it to a second in Japan and rode 20

minutes with them in the second race and have got closer and closer every race. This year has been a good learning curve. Realistically I was never going to fight with those guys for the title this year but I have been fighting with them in the races at the end so hopefully I can do it all through the series next year.

"I think I've overtaken Tyla, injury or not. We'll see next year but I think I'm ready to go for the wins now. Aubin can be incredibly fast,

particularly on the hard tracks that suit him. Look at Loket where he won and Donington in the first moto. But he couldn't come through in race two. Maybe that is one of his weaknesses. He gets good starts and gets away with it most times but when he doesn't he's out of it.

"That young French kid Paulin is going well too – he's had the opportunity and just grabbed it with both hands. He's like me, he's got in with the right people and he'll be getting faster all the time. I would expect him to have a year like I did this year. Tarroux as well. He was a real shock at Donington. The first race he made a pass but I don't think he's fit enough. It's definitely helped him to be on the Silver Action team. He'll be fast at some races.

"Rui is on the same bike as me and he can go incredibly well at some tracks. But there are some tracks where he doesn't go as well. Like Donington, he was nowhere. You need to be good every race. Leuret's probably had his best year now, who knows? Guarnieri is good when he's fit and will be there some times. There are plenty of them who can be there some races but the main guy's going to be Cairoli, he's there every week."



Leading soon-to-be ex-world champ
Christophe Pourcel in Bulgaria



AMERICAN DREAM

Avoiding the Tyla trap

It took you a long time to decide whether to stay in Europe or go to the US next year. What swung the balance?

"I'm staying in Europe because I think I can go to the very top next year. At heart Cairoli's going to be fast but there's a chance there and it would be good to go to America as champion. But this will be my last year.

"If I lose next year and Cairoli goes MX1 in 2009 I'm not going to start thinking 'this is my year now'. I'm not going to fall into the Tyla trap of staying one more year if it doesn't work out for some reason. It doesn't work like that. I just want to be able to go to America and be one of the top guys out there. Maybe I'm not ready yet and I need that extra year to go there straight away as one of the top guys.

"I'll probably do some races over there next year but I think it is important just to get my speed up here as well. The top guys over there are definitely on it and I do need to up my pace to stay with them. I don't think I'll be racing British championship next year, maybe some rounds if I want to."

Your contract is out at the end of '08. Do KTM have good cards to keep you in America?

"We'll see when the time comes. I haven't signed anything for America yet. I may stay with KTM, we'll just have to wait and see. But maybe after the des Nations. WMG, the company I ride for, have a lot of contacts over there. They know everyone which is good for me.

"It just depends on what I get offered. It's always good to have it sorted but if I can wait, I will do. It's not as though I'm going to get slower. I'm getting faster all the time. If I can have a good time at the des Nations then fight with Cairoli next year then they'll all be interested in me. Cairoli is obviously going to be fighting it out with them [Villopoto and Townley] so if I can be up with Cairoli, then they're going to see what I am capable of and will want me to ride for them. We'll just play it by ear for the time being.

"There's a lot of stuff we need to get sorted – where I'm going to live, who's going to train me – and that's another reason it's better to wait another year and get it sorted out. I won't go there unless I have all of that. With WMG, with Jamie and Bob [Moore], I have the right people making sure that everything is right when I go out there, I'm sure of that."



Beauty and the Beast! Hayley poses with Brad, sorry, Rocky...



W·A·G *Tales*

Cleaning kit, weeing in bottles, enduring Maccy D-powered flatulence – it ain't all glamour being a MX girlfriend as Brad Anderson's better half reveals!

Words by Hayley Metcalfe Photos by still-mx.co.uk

GLAMOROUS? MAYBE Moto GP or Formula 1 but not motocross – or at least not what I've experienced so far. My so-called glamorous lifestyle – or so people may think – isn't quite as easy as turning up to a race meeting looking good after a comfy night's sleep in a hotel, watching Brad ride from a cosy vantage point and cruising home to a life of relaxation and enjoyment until the following weekend.

As you probably know, we live in County Durham (t'up north, not too far outside of Newcastle). The majority of meetings Brad competes in – if they're in this country – are down south so most Saturdays we're up before



the sun comes out just so we can get to the event on time. Life would be so much easier if we had a chauffeur-driven Mercedes-Benz waiting outside, ready to whisk us away on our travels. But that's far from the truth... Weekends can consist of six-hour journeys – each way – and once Brad hits the road there's no stopping...for absolutely anything!

Before leaving the house we have to load the camper, he does the bike bit and I do the front end (food, drinks, clothes, bedding, dog stuff etc). I don't know why but we're always in a rush and once we hit the road it's like he's in a race. When a traffic light goes from amber to green it's

like the gate dropping and he's looking for the holeshot. We've had a good journey if we only get the finger from other irate drivers a couple of times!

The swerving of the van can play havoc with my bladder and as Brad refuses to stop I have no choice but to climb in the back – not easy while he's flying down B-roads at 60mph! If he needs to go I have to climb in behind him and take the pedals, it's like one of those Hollywood movies where the drivers swap positions and the vehicle's bouncing off the curbs. All this to be up the front of the traffic – stopping for a pee would cost us (Brad) so much time after all...

When it comes to map reading I'm as much use as a chocolate teapot. Couple that with Brad being hell bent on getting to every track as quickly as possible and it's a recipe for a whole heap of arguments. So I thought it was time to get with the 21st Century, invest in a sat nav and make our lives (mine) a whole lot easier. Being the typical male, Brad ripped the nav unit from its box and stuck it to the windscreen, tossing the instruction manual to one side before heading off. As we got close to our 'destination' the sat nav couldn't pinpoint exactly where the track was so after Brad decided it was taking us the long way round – and a few choice words later –



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Woman's work! Hayley polishes Brad's helmet between motos

the sat nav was pulled from the windscreen and flung out of the window! So now it's back to maps and god knows what it'll be like doing the GPs next year – we'll be lucky to find the right country!

Once we've arrived Brad needs to familiarise himself with the circuit and check the conditions etc so we normally walk the track together with our dog Rocky. Tea will follow not long after and is the first time we get to relax after the perils of a hectic day travelling. It's normally pasta bolognese before an early night – and separate beds. You know what they say about no sex before racing so there's no need for one of those stickers saying 'if this van's rocking don't come knocking'!

Sunday of course is race day. The first thing I do is breakfast, which is either porridge and bananas or Weetabix and strawberries – something healthy to start the day. I get Brad's kit out ready for practice and of course this is spotless after me cleaning it during the week. Once he's sorted I get ready – it's normally three jumpers and two coats and whatever else I can get my hands on that's warm. I like to look smart on race day but as it's normally cold or lashing down – or both – it's pretty hard but I've always got the trusty old pink wellies to fall back on, along with three pairs of socks!

When Brad's racing it's a great chance to catch up with my girlfriends. We usually all end up chewing our nails which then have to be put right with a manicure (which I also do so any of you ladies out there who want a manicure at the races my rates are very competitive...) or smoking 20 fags, just hoping our other halves finish injury free. It can be very hard watching the one you love risk life and limb out on the track – they're not even thinking about it when the red mist is down but from a girlfriend's point of view it's completely nerve-wracking.

If he's had a bad race he'll be huffing and puffing and shouting for me to get him stuff. It's just the disappointment he feels with himself when he thinks he could have done better, he puts a lot of pressure on himself to do well. I make pasta in between races – it's good energy food that releases its energy slowly so he's fit for the final moto. He'll sometimes have a cereal bar, Mars Bar or malt loaf as they're also good for a final boost before he heads back out. Fizzy drinks are off the menu when he's riding but Lucozade Sport and plenty of water help keep him hydrated.

Between races part of Brad's duties is to sit under the awning signing autographs and smiling for pictures while I'm round the back of the truck cleaning his lid, scrubbing down his kit and preparing his goggles for the next race. I get the bum deal there for sure. Cleaning helmets is such fun when you've just French manicured your nails...remember girls, very reasonable rates!

At the end of the day we help the team pack away, he collects his pay and we hit the road. It's always a McDonald's on the way home which can be a little hard to find, though if we had that sat nav it would be so much easier but we don't talk about that. I get to run in and get the food while he turns the van around making sure it's pointed in the right direction for a quick exit. After he's eaten his two large meals and six nuggets the bad guts kick in and he's on fire all the way home which I'm sure you can imagine is such a pleasurable experience. If we don't get held up we're normally home before midnight but that can vary depending on where we're travelling from.

So, my average week would work out a little like this...

Mondays I unload the camper and spend the rest of the day washing – it's so nice if we've had good weather and the kit isn't too dirty. I'm sure one day the washing machine will explode and half-a-ton of mud will be spewed all over the kitchen walls!

Tuesdays we go to the gym and clean the camper out ready for Wednesday, which is when we go practicing. While he's out putting the laps in I do the lap timing, pit boarding and videoing. Practice tracks are becoming few and far between in our area which is a shame, it just means more miles during the week. If he's got a race on a Wednesday in the summer it's more than likely going to be in Wales so we'd normally leave at 10am and get home Thursday morning. There is so much travelling involved in motocross – good job I like the sport really.

Thursdays and Fridays we go training at the gym in the morning. I go with Brad as he hates going on his own and works harder if I'm there. We push each other on so that works well. Whatever time I have left is spent doing the housework. Brad is useless round the house – he doesn't do a thing although it's probably for

the best as we'd only end up with domestic disasters, he's that bad. I could tell you about the DIY SOS he had when refitting a toilet but I'll spare him the embarrassment. Let's just say there was a lot of water involved...

Part of being at the top level of any sport is the diet which he takes very seriously (apart from the McDonalds overdose on a Sunday that is). Brad's diet includes lots of chicken, fish, rice, pasta and vegetables throughout the week to build his energy up for the gruelling racing come the weekend. It's not a case of making sure that everything is weighed and measured but he needs to be eating the right stuff so that his performance isn't affected.

If he's had a bad day racing he's a nightmare to live with – he can be p***ed off all week but I guess it shows how much he cares about his racing. If he didn't get p***ed off with a bad race then I would be more worried I think. He makes me laugh sometimes when he does the old 'I've pulled my leg' or any other limb he can think of, just to drop a hint so I run about after him. Does he not know that slavery was done away with many years ago? I go along with it but I know what you're up to Brad...

While we're on the subject of having it easy – how comes he gets free clothes? He seems to get everything cheap. On a visit to a dentist he even got his teeth veneered for half the price because his dentist loves bikes and duly did him a deal! And can you believe he even has his hair cut for free too! The bloody cheek! I reckon he must go straight into these places with a motocross magazine under his arm and spend the rest of the time talking himself up...he's a canny lad!

I'm really proud of Brad and thoroughly enjoy my life with him. I don't ever miss a race and feel part of the team which is really nice – I've made some good friends through motocross. For me the best bit is seeing Brad's face when he comes back after a race and knows he's ridden well, you really notice the energy coming off his team and family after a good race. On the other hand the sport can be extremely unforgiving – careers ended at the blink of an eye and lives changed forever.

My advice to any girl out there thinking of following their other half into motocross is just remember it ain't all glamour, it's a lifestyle.



Keeping Brad smiling is Hayley's main job at the races

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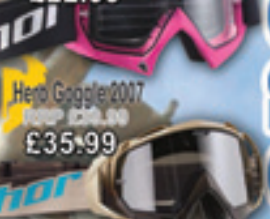
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Ricky's Ride!

Just one day after the GOAT goes 3-1 at the Motocross des Nations - his last ever major motocross race - we steal his Factory Suzuki RM-Z450 and take it for a spin around Budds Creek

Words by Sully Photos by Steve Cox



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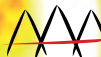
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THERE'S NO denying that 27-year-old Floridian Ricky Carmichael is something special when it comes to the sport of motocross. With 15 AMA titles and 150 overall wins in the bag the Tallahassee tornado has reset the record books and dominated the sport for the last 11 years.

Starting out as a product of the amateur Team Green programme it's little surprise that the then pudgy teenager started out his pro career with Kawasaki before moving to Honda at the tail end of 2001, then making the leap to Suzuki for 2005. At that point Suzuki hadn't won a major motocross title Stateside since Greg Albertyn wrapped up the series in 1999 – when Ricky was still racing the 125 class – and the yellow brand certainly weren't considered to have the best bikes out there.

But by working closely with his long-time spannerman Mike Gosselaar, the legendary Roger De Coster and a fully committed team of Suzuki technicians, RC was able to wrap up another AMA SX title with the two-stroke RM250. That 2005 supercross championship will probably go down in history as being the last ever major motocross title won on a stroker. After taking the SX crown Ricky then jumped onto the brand new and totally unproven RM-Z450 for the outdoor Nationals where he won 22 of 24 motos and took every overall on his way to title #13. He's not ridden another bike since.

Now in my opinion the stock RM-Z450 is nowhere near being the best 450 four-stroke on the market today (although the 2008 electronically fuel-injected model does look much more promising) so I've always wondered how Ricky goes so fast on his considering the AMA

production rules state that the chassis – one of the biggest problems with the stock bike – must remain as Suzuki sell it.

Of course motor, transmission, suspension, ignition, carburettor and wheel modifications are all allowed and so long as the bike weighs more than 216lbs (around 98kg), doesn't have any type of traction control or paddle tyres and the handlebars aren't cracked, anything goes.

And in their pursuit of performance Suzuki America have built a big-budget bike that exploits the rules to the max. With 20,000 USDs worth of magnesium carburettor and 40K-plus Factory Showa suspension as well as all the in-house and Pro Circuit modifications it's pretty obvious that money is little object when championships are on the line. The end result is a bike that not only looks great but goes well too if Ricky's results from his semi-retirement swansong season and the AMA Nationals footage on Motors TV are to be believed.

At a glance this bike looks trick with the One Industries Makita team graphics and seat cover (des Nations edition), Pro Taper braceless bars and well wired on half-waffle grips, especially engraved Hinson clutch cover, Pro Circuit titanium exhaust and silencer and so on but get closer and you really see what's hot. Parts like the works billet aluminium front brake caliper, suspension linkage, carbon chainguide and factory hubs are bits most of us will only ever dream of getting our mitts on but they're all right here on Ricky's ride.

One important part missing from the bike today is its usual throttle twister RC who's deservedly hung up his boots in order to pursue

a career in NASCAR. With Ricky gone off somewhere to practice his left-hand turns I'm gonna get the chance to spend 25 minutes on his bike on the super rough Budds Creek circuit.

With RC and I being not so similar in stature – he's around 5'4" and 145lb while I'm over six foot and weigh a wee bit more – I wasn't surprised to find his bike felt oh-so low when I first sat on it. The combination of soft – for my weight – suspension and a 14mm shorter subframe with a shaved seat perched on top made this 450 feel more like a 150.

Ricky runs his brake and clutch levers in a fairly neutral position although the front brake lever is adjusted so it sits very close to the bars – there's approximately a one inch gap between the lever and throttle grip – so Ricky's tiny hands can reach and operate it. The clutch lever and cable is set up in a more traditional way with 2mm of cable slack that can be easily changed mid-race thanks to the billet on-the-fly adjuster. The biting point is at the end of the lever's travel – just where you'd expect it.

I was surprised to hear that RC's footpegs are around 5mm further back than the ones found on the stock bike. Both the rear brake and gear levers are the same length as stock although the shifter's nub is a little longer and so protrudes further. The rear brake pedal sits roughly level with the footpeg and when pressed immediately applies the rear brake.

The motor on the bike was already warm when I got my hands on it and started first prod with one slow kick and the thumb-operated hot start lever – which is situated on the right side of the bars on its own bracket between the

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front brake and the throttle assembly – pulled in a clockwise direction.

Once running the bike sounds reasonably quiet on tickover and has a beautiful bark when blipped thanks to the FIM-tested 98 decibel Pro Circuit titanium silencer.

As soon as I hit the track I couldn't help but notice how well jetted this bike is. Most magazine test riders will often say that the jetting on a new stock bike is spot on and normally I'd have to agree. However after riding Ricky's bike it's apparent just how much better and cleaner running four-stroke motors can be.

Obviously, Ricky's engine is heavily tuned and most of the increased performance can be apportioned to that but without such perfect carburation there's no way that the power would be half as strong or manageable as it is. I used to think that truck stop coffee was the strongest thing in the world but after riding Ricky's racer I'm gonna go out on a limb and claim that the motor in Carmichael's dirt scoot is even stronger.

Suzuki won't offer up a claimed horsepower figure but what I can tell you is that this motor pulls from absolutely nothing and keeps on keeping on all the way to the rev-limiter! And because the jetting's so perfect and there's an abundance of ponies right through the range this bike is very easy to ride fast and in a relatively controlled manor.

Of course it's still possible to fire out of turns in a low gear that'll snap your head right back but the way to get the best from this bike – and the overall set-up more than helps you achieve it – is to come in carrying a taller gear to keep things smooth. And although Ricky will never know it – Gosselaar claims logged data shows that Carmichael uses his throttle like an on/off switch – his bike offers excellent roll-on throttle performance too.

The suspension's performance is equally as excellent as that of the motor. The unobtainable to the public Showa units feel much softer than I expected them to and even though I used all of the available travel they never once felt harsh, bottomed out or loaded up. The track at Budds Creek was super rough by the time I got to ride it but Ricky's bike offered a ride that felt swan-across-a-lake smooth considering how cut up the track surface was.

Under acceleration the bike drives straight and true even through the roughest of bumps but it's probably most impressive in downhill braking bumps – the type that will have your stock units loading up in record time. Although it still has a tendency to kick up at the rear the overall feel is one of control and I can think of at least one



occasion where I hit a bump and got away with it where stock suspension would have dumped me on my arse.

Although Suzuki claim the gearbox is stock I have a feeling the shifter mechanism has been polished, tweaked and tickled as changing gear is oh-so smooth. Finding neutral with the motor running is almost impossible too and I'm guessing that the spacing between first and second gears has been closed to lessen the chance of RC selecting it by accident.

In the past I've found stock Suzuki gearboxes to be quite clunky but this box is buttery and will even snick up a cog under full load – that's impressive! Downshifting is equally effortless too so no worries there.

The Nissin factory brakes are super-strong like you'd expect. While the front is progressively

powerful the rear offers very little feedback and has a tendency to kill the motor when braking hard into turns – especially if the rear wheel is kicking up in braking bumps.

While the front brake is super powerful the proximity of the lever to the throttle grip means it's possible for me to occasionally trap the knuckles on my third and fourth finger before applying the brake enough to slow myself down for the turn. This meant I'd miss ruts or simply come into a corner much hotter than I was comfortable with. Of course, this is purely a set-up thing and with Ricky owning a pair of tiny – albeit very strong – hands, what works for him doesn't work for me.

And the front brake is not the only area in which I struggle to find enough space to get the job done properly. With the seat being so

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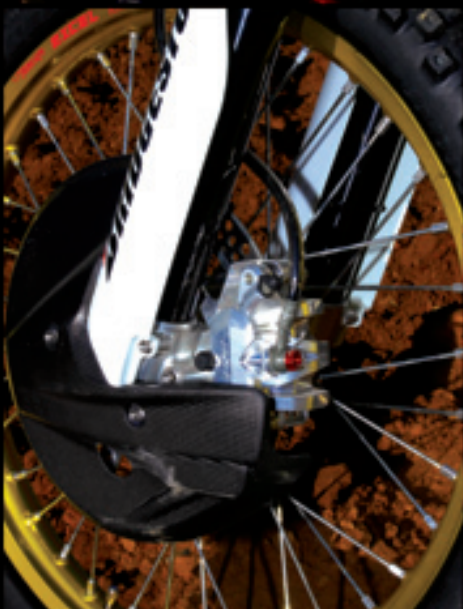
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Cam: SMC works type
Piston: CP Pistons
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Transmission: Production
Clutch: FCC, Hinson, SMC works type
Carburettor: Keihin (magnesium)
Spark plug: NGK
Ignition: Programmable
Exhaust: Pro Circuit
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Sprockets: Tag Metals
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Hubs: SMC works type
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Axle: SMX works type
Spokes: Production
Brake pads: Works Nissin
Brake discs: SMC works type
Master cylinder: Works Nissin
Calipers: Works Nissin
Forks: Showa works kit
Shock: Showa works kit
Linkage: SMC works type
Triple clamps: SMC works type
Handlebars: Pro Taper
Grips: Pro Taper
Levers: SMC works type
Skid plate: SMC works type
Graphics: One Industries
Seat foam: Stock – modified
Foot pegs: SMC works type



low where it's cut out I find turning a bit of a nightmare too as when I slide forwards on the seat I drop down so far there's not enough space for my arms or legs to function properly in the cramped cockpit.

I found by sitting more centrally in the bike – right on the edge of the step – I could create enough space to make the bike turn well in the loamy conditions. On occasion I'd still catch my foot or leg on the edge of one of the deep ruts which would then make the bike pick up. One time I even jammed my leg in there hard enough to split the bike's airbox – oops! Again, it's all a problem of personal set-up and what works for the world's fastest motocross racer doesn't necessarily work for someone who's over five-and-a-half foot tall.

Set-up issues aside this bike is way more awesome to ride than it's probably possible to describe. I was expecting a bike with harsh suspension and an even harsher hitting motor but I was pleasantly surprised when I found it

had neither. Yes, the power is plentiful but it's right there right through the range, even when Mike Gosselaar was telling Cox 'I wish he'd change up a gear and get it off the rev-limiter' the bike felt like it had plenty more to give.

Getting out of the gate on this bike is easy either with or without the starting device hooked on. Provided there's plenty of grip you'd have to either have a very poor gate pick or be a spineless douche bag not to yank the holey on this bike, it really is that fast.

In an ideal world I'd have had longer than 25 minutes to play with this bike and I'd also have been allowed to set it up with taller bars, a full height seat and a more suitable lever position but that just wasn't possible. As it was I took Ricky's race bike from under the Suzuki team awning – the exact same one he took to run 3-1 at the des Nations – and ran some laps on it. And despite being set-up for a short-person this bike is a blast to ride and unexpectedly rideable – good work Suzuki America!





ROBBED!

For 12 years Josh Coppins has based himself on the other side of the world from his native New Zealand as he chases his dream of a world MX title. This year he had the sport's ultimate prize finally, firmly in his sights - only for it to be snatched away...

Words by Gary Freeman and Jonathan Bentman Photos by Redeye

Did Steve Ramon win the 2007 MX1 world title? No, Josh Coppins lost it. You can cut it any way you like, fact is Josh Coppins was the runaway winner right up to the point his rear brake failed in the Czech GP and he was flung into a fence post. How does that feel? To lose a world crown. Well here's how, in Josh's own words, beginning to end...

"After the British GP I sat down on the couch for a week. Let it all run through my mind. I've had my best friend from New Zealand, Scotty Columb, here and my cousin and we're all really close and so I could talk about it to those guys. I've been here 12 years and it's been my dream. It wasn't like I had a shot at it. I had it in the bag. All I had to do was nurse it home.

"That's hard to accept. And it wasn't a mistake I made. It wasn't that

I tried to jump a triple I couldn't make and got hurt. The rear brake went, I couldn't stop, I hit the fence. And within that fence I happened to hit the post. If it had happened anywhere else on the track it wouldn't have been a problem. If I hadn't hit the post it wouldn't have been a problem.

"And you know what's hard for me

to accept - that Steve Ramon has won the championship without winning a single GP. I've nothing against Steve whatsoever but I've just felt this isn't right. If Stribos had won - well he was a guy I had a great fight with in Portugal - then okay. Even Pourcel, who dominated in Italy, both motos, yeah, he deserves it. But Ramon, this year he was never good, not for one race. He was good but not the best so I find that hard to accept. That said you cannot take it away from him. He scored those points, he is worthy of it.

"But the thing that's pissed me off the most has not been the bonus I've not won, not anything to do with not winning the championship. Not the money, not the crown. The little things. The little things I wanted to be proud of and to be a part of. To be a world champion like so many of my heroes. I wanted to be a part of things like the advert '40 years of Thor' where all their champions are in there. McGrath, Townley, Albertyn, Hallman - riders like that. And I wanted to be part of that. That would mean more to me. To take my place in history. That's what I wanted most. It's not just been this year. It's been my life."





Josh's medical team compare notes on his shoulder injury



profile



I'D CHANGE NOTHING

"But looking back on the season I wouldn't change one thing. I started the season well. Even pre-season I was on the podium. It was my first season with Yamaha, it was taking me time to adjust but I did okay. I won the first GP. I won the second GP, I went 1-2 at the third, 1-1 at the fourth and I would have gone 1-1 at the fifth if my gearbox hadn't broken. The first five GPs and I'd won three of them.

"In all I was on the podium for nine of the ten GPs I rode, excluding Czech. So, okay, yeah looking back on it there are three things I'd change. The gearbox problem in Germany, being sick in Sweden – the only race out of the 10 GPs where Ramon made some points on me – and then the brake line failure. For me it's a year I'm proud of – I never really made a mistake.

"Even after missing nine motos, not scoring in 10, I'm quite proud that I finished third in the championship. That's a quarter of the season that I missed. I still led the most number of laps – Strijbos, the next man, is still 60 laps less than me. I still had the most podiums by three. The most GP wins. Held the most red plates. The only thing I got beaten in is pole positions – and there I was second. But pole positions don't win you championships. Yeah if you ask me am I happy with the season, the answer's 'you're damn straight I am'. What an awesome season.

"But I didn't win anything – and that's hard for me to accept also."

THE ACCIDENT

"So let's go back to Czech. Race two and the moment when my world championship was taken from me.

"It was the second race. It had started to rain and track was pretty tricky and I said to myself 'don't panic, you've a big points lead, you're in fourth place'. Billy MacKenzie passed me and I passed him right back. Strijbos was running away with the race – but he's really good on this track so no panic about that, he's no threat in the championship. Ramon was behind me so I thought 'okay just take it easy and try to bring home a podium place and all will be all right'.

"So then I jumped up past the mechanic's area, took the right turn and did the big step-down, went for the rear brake – nothing. Absolutely nothing. It was strange because I had definitely had rear brake in the previous turn. As you can imagine, you're going pretty fast there – you've jumped down and it's really bumpy so with no rear brake the back is kicking up really high. And I can't go on the front brake. For three reasons. It's steep. It's muddy. And the rear's already off the ground – so you're in an endo position trying to stop the thing from going over.

"So I had some decisions to make. I was like 'sh*t – I can't stop! Do I lay it down?' But it was real bumpy. The last thing you want to do is lay it down in the bumps 'cause the bike will kick up and it'd be a pretty nasty spill. So I thought 'I'll hit the fence and go over it but then I realised there was about a 10 metre drop the other side. So I thought 'sh*t, this ain't gonna happen'. By the time I thought all that through I was getting pretty close to the fence, so just laid it down and the bike high sided and threw me in backwards. Every 10 metres there was a wooden post, naturally I slammed into that.

"So I picked the bike up, feeling the hurt but thinking positive, 'I'm all right, I need some points here'. I got going in about 10th place but I could feel the shoulder clicking and I knew it was done. When I got to the medics I told them it was dislocated. But they knew it was broken right away."

THE COMEBACK

"The thing with the shoulder bone is that it's the second strongest bone in your body so it's the second hardest to break. I didn't quite understand the depth of the injury. That's why it felt dislocated because the shoulder joint was left hanging loose, because the socket was broken away from the shoulder. That's why it was out of place. And crucially there's nothing they can do for it, physically, apart from putting your arm in a small sling.

"My doctor told me it was an eight-week healing process. But he knew my circumstances and he knew we had to do all we could to shorten that. So I had hypobaric, magnetic and laser treatment for the first week. The second week in Germany I was getting acupuncture and massage. Then I went back for my first check and my doctor said it's unbelievable how much healing had occurred. It was looking good. Then I was only a week-and-a-half away from Ireland and he confirmed it was too early, if I rode I'd re-break it. I figured that was cool. I just had to come back strong for England, be strong.

"At that time I had to start working out with the physio because I had been two weeks without working the muscles so I started working out twice a day. Doing exercises in the swimming pool. As well as every second day travelling to Germany for treatment. I went to the doctor for another check up before England. And he said yes, the healing had slowed down because I'd done too much. But he said too it was a Catch 22 situation, if I hadn't done the work I wouldn't have been strong enough to do the ride but I would have healed more. But I couldn't have ridden without the muscles. He said I had to try. But I know now those two weeks were what finished me. Where I had to try.

"It felt pretty good though, like 80 per cent strength and I was getting full movement back, I was getting power, it was coming on and I still hadn't used any pain medication so I was thinking I could make it happen.

"I rode the Wednesday and the Thursday before the British GP. The Wednesday I was pretty good. It was bloody painful but pain I could bear. I only did 10 minute runs but it was all right. And then I went to ride the next day and I could only do two motos of 10 minutes and the third moto I could only do eight minutes. It was just too sore. But I'd only taken a Voltarin [a prescription painkiller] so I thought it might be okay. After the Wednesday I was optimistic but after the Thursday I was thinking 'sh*t'.

"At Donington I had treatment at the track. I had a doctor there, my trainer and two physios and we worked really, really hard. Saturday went well. First training I was 23rd, second training 14th, then in qualifying I was 10th. That's not bad – I'd qualified in front of good riders. So I figured I could grab a handful of points. Walking the track Saturday night I was optimistic, hoping for something like fifth – an unbelievable result – but okay, a top 10 was what I would like. I had to believe that was possible.

"Then in the first race I started second, pretty much had the holeshot and rode the first lap behind Strijbos thinking this was all right. Then a couple of guys passed me because I wasn't riding that well, I was uncomfortable. Then I started slowing as the pain came in, especially after 15 minutes and then I just gritted it out. I was in so much pain I couldn't see my pitboard, I didn't know where I finished. I ended up 15th but the last 10 minutes were so, so sore.

"I'd taken as much medicine as I could without being drowsy so for the second race I didn't know how it was going to be possible. But as soon as I stopped riding the pain went away. Yet I kind of knew it was over. When I did the sighting lap for the second race I was in so much pain. I came in and said to my cousin 'I can't do it, I just can't do it'. I was too sore. He said go for the start and see what happens from there. →

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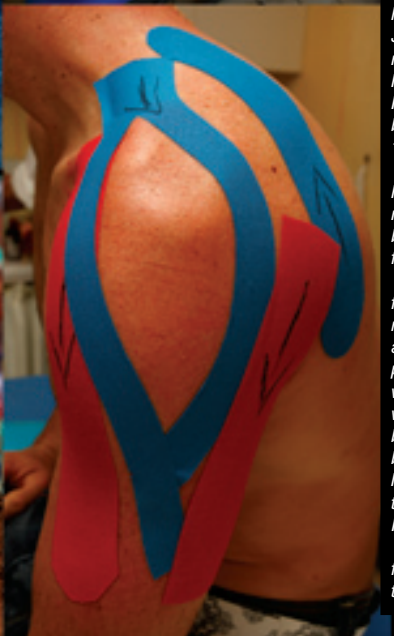
JOSH ON... ...missing Stefan

DBR: Have you missed Stefan Everts this year and how much has he influenced your career?
JC: "You only have to see the two of us ride to see I'm no Stefan Everts! I did pick a few things out of the way he works. Mostly his work ethic. That impressed me. He's also obviously very smooth and effortless on the bike and he was always stronger than me in the last 10 minutes of a race."

"I don't know if he was physically fitter but I think he was more effortless on the bike and could save more energy. So I've smoothed out my riding a little bit so I guess you could say I took a little bit of that from Stefan."

"He was a target to aim for. When I came back from injury in 2006 I wanted a lot of podiums – but really I wanted wins. To beat Stefan. It was as simple as that. So I came back for eight GPs, I had seven podiums and one of those was a win. To be honest I wanted two wins but I blew it in France. I kind of wanted to spoil Stefan's last GP for him. That's not being nasty, just competitive. It was a good feeling to beat him in Ireland though and I did it in style – we lapped up to third place and although the press were talking up other riders before the 2007 season started I'd lapped them all except for Barragan."

"I do miss Stefan as someone to look and learn from but I think he'd done his time and is a legend of the sport. He has nothing more to prove."



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"But I couldn't even put my hand on the handlebar, I had to lift it on with my good hand, I didn't have any power or strength. I got a bad start – the pain was too much to concentrate properly and I wobbled around. It was too dangerous so I pulled in. That was it.

"There was no way I could ride at Lierop. There was a 10cm fracture in my shoulder bone, as it turned out it was only healed for the top 2cm and the bottom 2cm – in the middle was a gap, still. And those bits that were 'healed' were like chewing gum. Soft. I'd done a lot of damage.

"I'd sent out so many positive messages about the comeback and my doctor had shared my optimism. But now, again when I look back, I can see it was never going to happen. After riding on the Wednesday before the British GP the doctor had texted me asking how it went, I said 'not too bad'. Thursday morning he called. And I kind of thought at that time 'this is a busy surgeon, why is he calling me?' but I was concentrating on my riding so let it go. Then on Saturday night he asks me 'has it held?'

"And it was at that time when I realised this guy is not real confident – yet he was always confident when I was talking to him. It was then that I realised it was touch and go. And of course it didn't hold. And then I damaged the fracture more on Sunday. I called him Monday and asked what should I do and he said 'try and ride for an hour on Wednesday in the sand and if it feels okay try and race'. And I knew 'this is Monday, unless I'm hit by some kind of miracle there's no way I can ride on Wednesday I can't even lift my arm!' There was no chance."

GOING FORWARDS

"After Lierop I went to see my doctor again, I wanted to get an idea of what to do from here on. I had the Motocross des Nations coming up, end of season races, races in Australia. I didn't want to leave Europe without being 100 per cent. This was the doctor that taken me right through the injury.

"He said I'd done a great deal of damage in England so I should take another two weeks off. He said originally this is a six to eight week injury for a normal person. Trying to ride after six weeks, well that set back me two weeks. I have to be careful, to sit it out, take my time because if I damage it again like in England then it'll stop healing. So I'm going to the des Nations to watch. I'm not going to ride until about a week after he says I can.

"Looking forward. After being pretty p****ed for that week after the British GP I went to Tony Cairoli's party and got pretty drunk. In fact I had a great time. And that really helped. After that I thought 'okay you've been a slob for a week, time to turn this around'. Since then I've been training every day, working toward next year. I've been talking to Yamaha about next season, about the problems I had this year with the bike. I have had a meeting with my trainer to set a programme for next year. I've planned my end-of-season testing, planned my off-season races and planned my winter training.

"If I win in 2008 will I come back in 2009? Hell yes, absolutely. As long as I still have the desire and the passion and feel I can win. Then yes, definitely. And that's the thing – I feel what's happened to me has shown me that I still have that passion and desire because it took me just seven days to get over what happened. I think it would take some riders a lot longer. And that showed to me I still have the love for this sport, I still love to ride. I haven't ridden now two months – excluding England – and I just miss riding the bike. And that's a good thing. This is the longest I've been off the bike for a while.

"And I just want to get out and ride."

An oxygen chamber speeds up the healing process – but not quickly enough to save his season



JOSH ON... ...his buddy Ben

DBR: How did it feel when Ben Townley left?

JC: "Ben's been a lot to me. Housemate. Best mate. Training companion. Bloody good all round bloke. Of course I miss him.

"I was pumped for him because when he came to Europe it was a stepping stone to USA – he didn't tell anyone because he didn't want to pee everyone off but that was always his goal. Even as a kid he'd raced at Loretta Lynn's and knew he wanted to race in the States.

"So I was stoked for him when he left here because he was about to fulfil his dream. And he left with a world title and that's something I haven't done yet, so that was pretty cool. 2005 was a really cool year because we were second and third in the championship and we were pretty close on points. Both winning GPs. Not many people could have done that.

"When I did well he was happy for me and when he did well I was happy for him. And we looked out for each other. Here's a prime example. I dislocated my shoulder at Hawkstone Park and booked a flight back to Belgium to see my doctor the next day. Ben was there to pick me up at one o'clock in the morning at the airport. He'd also been riding that day but made sure I was okay and also took me to the hospital the next day. And he was one of my main competitors that year. That was awesome.

"Something Ben has that I don't is his deep love of the sport of motocross. I'm quite happy to walk away from it at the end of my career. But Ben loves it so much that when he quits he'll still want to know what's going on. He's been in USA now for almost two years and he still wants to know exactly what's happening in Europe. He's straight on the phone after a race – he'll be following up the lap times and on the computer checking out the race and I love that about him. He's so passionate about the sport.

"When he left it was quite empty for the first few days because Ben's a cool character and a good guy and so full of energy. We'd go to the gym for two hours and then cycle for two hours in the afternoon. Then we'd be sitting on the couch and he'd say 'let's go ride the mini-bikes' or 'let's go trials riding'. After he left I spent a lot of my time watching TV. But now Scott Columb lives with me and my cousin Jamie so it's cool again."

Specs Appeal!

Coming ready to rip at the highest level, TM's 125 is dripping with top-notch bits - and it's precisely this high-spec as stock that's contributed to some unfair criticism. But fear not little TM stroker, here comes Walker riding to the rescue...

Words by Geoff Walker Photos by still-mx.co.uk

TM ARE celebrating their 30th year in '07 and the marque seem to be going from strength-to-strength. The super-passionate Italian manufacturers are renowned for their bikes being specced to the max with race parts and ready to rip at the highest level!

One of the most popular models in the range is the 125 MX and this is the focus of this month's Godfrey's Globe. TM make fast engines. That is fact. These things rip but sometimes in the past the little blue bombers have been known to self-destruct unless kept in perfect condition... But hold on - isn't that true

of most 125cc motocross bikes?

I believe that the TM has had more than its unfair share of criticism over the years. Because the bikes come so highly specced they need some TLC but the Jap bikes come in a lower state of tune so they should be an 'easier keep'. In reality the TM comes tuned and ready to win while the Jap bikes have always needed a trip to the 'grindomat' to get their performance up to the level of the Italian machines.

The bike featured is Stuart Edmonds' race bike as used in the awesome DEP two-stroke championship this year. Stuart and Jonny Pettitt

have been ripping holeshots and winning races all year on pretty much completely stock bikes (JP runs specially lowered Showa front forks as he has done for six years). These bikes are fast and with engine measurement most race weekends at the DEP to prove they aren't oversize, all the proof you need is in the holeshots! To quote the DEP technical team "the bikes sound so strong and are so fast we just have to test them". Now that is a compliment indeed!

Okay, let's take a look around the bike to see what makes it a winner...



Stuart Edmonds' 125cc TM two-stroke missile



The motor offers strength and reliability



Front brake mixes Nissin and Brembo bits

Silicon dabs stop the rads rubbing – and no-one likes rubbed rads do they?



The 50mm Marzocchi forks are getting better every year

THE GOOD...

The motor. Strong power and reliability. The motor uses top quality parts including a machined crank, special V-Force reeds with a TM-machined block and a forged Asso Werke single ring piston. The coolest thing about the TM motor is the cooling system. I personally think this makes the bike superb. The cylinder is liquid-cooled as with all bikes but the key to the TM cooling system is that the crank is also liquid-cooled.

There is a water jacket which runs to the bottom side of the crank which has a cooling effect on the motor which keeps it from losing power from overheating. Most small motorbikes will lose a considerable amount of power as a tough moto goes on as too much internal heat affects the running throughout the motor and its moving parts.

HGS front pipe from standard. The pipe is developed for the bike to run at its peak performance so the guys do not need to use anything different from stock.

The billet triple clamps are made by TM in-house and are strong and solid as well as looking good. The rubber-damped handlebar clamps are adjustable and come ready for your choice of oversize bars.

The brakes show the company's commitment to quality. The rear Nissin brake speaks for itself but the front brake mix of a Nissin master cylinder coupled with a Brembo caliper is superb! Some of the test riders felt the full Brembo system was too aggressive and the Nissin didn't have the

correct feel so they combined both to find their perfect feel and power! Now that is commitment to the rider! It doesn't seem to matter what is written on the product with TM development staff, it just simply has to work for a faster lap time!

The suspension is taken care of by Ohlins at the rear and 50mm Marzocchis on the '07 model up front. The Ohlins has been tried and tested to the max over many years on the TMs and the Marzocchis are getting stronger in performance by the year. The forks don't blow seals very often and have a high build quality and tuneability through their twin chamber and internal bladder design.

The swingarm is a meaty unit and looks factory and the wheels are billet machined polished hubs strapped to Excel rims with oversize discs attached to the rear and front (floating) as well as a nine-point, fixed rear sprocket. That puppy ain't coming loose unless you are a complete mechanical idiot!

A Regina racing chain comes as stock so there is no need to use your chain once or twice and chuck it in the bin like most standard elastic band chains. I personally like the steel perimeter frame as I believe the flex in the chassis allows for an easier set-up. For '08 the range is coming with ally frames so we will see...

Koukusan Japanese ignition is as reliable as the competition.

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THE NOT SO GOOD...

The dreaded water intake of the ignition cover and carb strikes again. Five mins of your time is required after a wash to de-water the stator and flywheel behind the ignition cover and drain the carb bowl. This is simple stuff and is necessary to keep everything running sweet.

The hydraulic clutch master cylinder window must be covered as it can easily pop out if hit by a stone. The window is simply in the wrong place.

The feel at the lever is a little heavy but with a motor like this you need a strong clutch spring set-up and there is not much need for abuse with the amount of power available!

The main air bleed screws on the forks have small rubber covers on them and the internal bladder bleed screws are not covered. Some people mistake the two and get a small oil bath from the bladder bleed screws.



Billet triple clamps and rubber-mounted bar clamps are super-sweet



Meaty swingarm looks factory



HGS pipe is made with the TM in mind

AND THE MODS...

Although the bike is run really close to stock there are always a few mods to personalise and make life a little easier at the track.

Carburation is modified to run the UK's super unleaded fuel at 40 to 1. The needle is dropped by one clip position (leaner) and the main jet is bumped up from a 175 to a 182 to get the puppy ripping! Two of the carb breather pipes are also run up into the airbox to keep the carb breathing.

The two-stroke oil of choice for the team is ELF HTX976. Stuart runs Renthal 997 Twinwalls with Smith soft compound grips. The front brake pads locating pin clip is wired up to stop it coming adrift. The rad cap is drilled and tied to stop any accidental knock-offs during racing.

A cool mod is the silicon dabs on the rads which stop the rad scoops rubbing on the rad tops.

The only change from stock 13/51 gearing is the odd change to a 50-tooth rear sprocket to stop the team riders over-revving the bikes in some heavier conditions.

JP and Stuart both like to run the HGS tail pipe which is available as a TM part as it makes the bike a little crisper again in sound.

To summarise, Professor Walker reckons the TM125 MX is one seriously fast bike. It's not perfect but what is?



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Re-Branded!



Say hello TCX, wave goodbye Oxtar...

WHEN A company decides to re-brand it really is a massive undertaking. Oxtar boots have been around since 2001 and are a market leader in European boot sales. The Italian company focuses 100 per cent on boot manufacture and design with riders such as Kevin Windham, Steve Ramon, Mike Brown, Ken De Dycker and Cyril Despres trusting their precious feet to the quality of the product.

After a long period of trying to fend off one of their competitors from a court case concerning Oxtar branding the Italian company have decided to flip the bird at the opposition and re-brand to call the boots TCX. The company have teamed up with another design and manufacturing outfit called Novation who are responsible for design and manufacture for brands such as Nike, Ray Ban, Ferrari, McLaren Mercedes and Aston Martin.

The companies together seem like a formidable pairing as the quality and design of the boots are going to go from being super high quality to off the scale as they keep their 'focus on boots' slogan true to their word. I was lucky to be invited to the TCX headquarters in Italy to take a look around both the TCX manufacturing facility and the Novation design and manufacture site.

Italians are a passionate bunch and this crew is no different. The passion for the design and manufacture of quality and – most importantly – safe boots is unbelievable. There are a lot of seriously intense Italians working to make the safest and hardest wearing boots they possibly can.

With the technical side of the top of the range boot being second to none and using the patented TCS (torsion control system) you know these guys are serious.

The TCS system is almost like a knee brace for your ankle and with their medical experts they have developed a system which runs on the outside of the boot where they say the protection is needed and allows movement of the ankle for control. But as the name suggests it also manages to restrict and control the ankle in a crash situation by using a

stop system which restricts the movement and slows it down to aid in protecting the ankle in extreme situations.

The Pro boot also runs with an inner bootie which is developed using special gel pads inside for comfort and protection for the rider. This kind of technology takes years of experience and development from a team that's been with Oxtar from the beginning.

The off-road range has a boot for everyone and the development is no less for kids' boots as it is at the top of the tree. The TCX kids' boots are specially made to allow movement in young kids' ankles and feet as too much bracing and stiffness could cause more injury to young bones. This level of development shows just how expert the team of designers are as they work hard with medical professionals in all fields of expertise.

There are entry level boots which do exactly what they say on the tin and the mid-level boot would suit a lot of enduro and trail riders as it is slightly lighter than the top of the range Pro boot but still offers the FCS (forward control system). This system offers the rider support in an over extension range to protect the ankle in a sudden front or rear movement. Using some of the same technology the FCS works in its realm of movement in the same way as the Torsion Control System but without the obvious complete wrap-around protection of the TCS and the mid-level boot doesn't run with an inner bootie.

After a brief from Cyril Despres on the Pro boot the quality is easy to see as he explained how he rides for 50,000 kilometres in his desert, Baja and extreme enduro races. "It is not possible to ride for this many kilometres if your boots are not comfortable, I have to wear them for 16 hours some days and they have never let me down in all the years I have worn them!"

So there it is, Oxtar is gone and TCX is born and the company are taking boot design and technology to new levels in our world of dirt. Take a look at them, you might just become a fan for life if you value your feet as highly as a lot of the pro racers out there.



WIN!WIN!WIN!

TCX Pro 2 boots up for grabs

To celebrate the birth of TCX we've got a pair of their top-of-the-range Pro 2 boots worth £259.99 to give away to one lucky reader and to be in with a shout of slipping into something Italian and super-comfy all you need to do is answer one easy question. Which recently crowned '07 world MX champion wears TCX boots?

- Is it: A) Steve Ramon
B) Steve Jambon
C) Steve Conway
D) Steve Steveofferson

Think you know the answer? Then write it down on the back of a postcard or sealed envelope and send it – along with your name, address, boot size and a daytime contact number – to us at Dirt Bike Rider, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4AG. Alternatively, hook up to our website at www.dirtbikerider.com and follow the competition link...

Entries close on November 8 when the first correct entry picked totally at random will win the boots.



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Just when you thought all the sick riding spots were played out, Powerband Films presents OTP4 "Another Score". Powerband Films travels the world in search of the best riders and terrain. The west coast of USA is no longer the only spot for Freeriding and FMX.

SX EXPOSED 3.3 : SEASON OF CHANGE

The 2007 Supercross season marks the end of an era for Ricky Carmichael. This year, James Stewart took control of the Supercross class and showed off his incredible riding skills and his fierce competitive spirit. He appears ready to challenge many of Carmichael's incredible records.

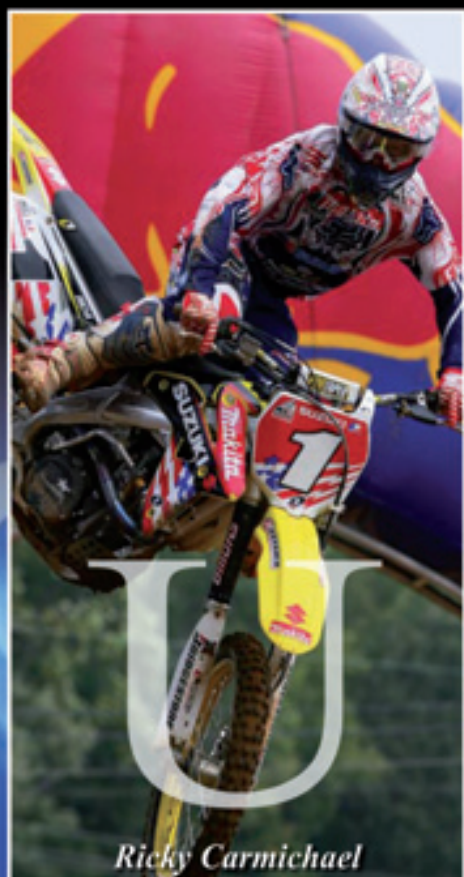


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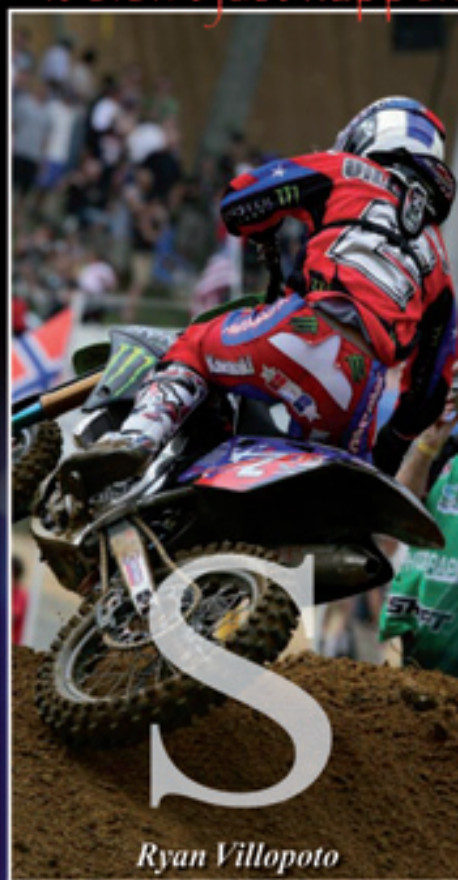
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Available through selected Authorised Fox Dealers following the MXoN, Patriot Encore 2 Limited Edition products are the next offering of Limited Edition products for 2007. They are the same pant, jersey, boot and helmet that Ricky Carmichael was wearing as Team USA retained the Motocross of Nations Chamberlain Cup on September 23rd. Fox commemorates the return of the MXoN to US soil by making a very limited quantity of each of these products available. Own a piece of history-in-the-making : Fox Limited Edition.



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EUROVISION!

Posting times that would have seen the qualify for an MX3 GP, the 85cc boys who contest the European championship really are the shape of things to come...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

WANT TO see the MX2 GP podium of 2012? Then go and watch the top kids on 85s in Europe because they are the future. No disrespect to Sam Davis or the other lads in the UK but, as Sam found out at the world juniors back in August when he finished out of the points, the boys up front have already stepped up to the next level. And they have done it by contesting the European series, racing the best from the whole continent at speeds which would have qualified them for the MX3 GP on the same programme.

DBR's GP correspondent Alex Hodgkinson met the stars of the future at Faenza...

JEFFREY HERLINGS

Dutch dynamo

The youngest of the top kids (he turned 13 three days after Faenza), the son of late '70s sand supremo Peter from Elsendorp near Eindhoven lost the tie-break for third but proved already that he is well on his way to avoiding the trap which stunted his dad's career at world level.

Jeffrey's only win came in Denmark and his other five podiums were also in sand. But top fives were added every week on hardpack and he knows how important it is to master these tracks.

"Dad said I had to learn hardpack if I wanted to make it in motocross so we went practising in France and I enjoyed it and was fast. My dad couldn't ride hardpack at the top level and that was his downfall so I know how important it is. I like sand and I guess I'm one of the fastest riders in Europe for my age in sand but I actually prefer riding hardpack. But I still have a lot to learn."

The Dutch federation is one of the few federations with an eye to the future. "They send Leon Giesbers to the races with us as trainer. He's a good guy. We don't get any money up front but they give us a licence for free and they will give us a couple of thousand Euros at the end of the year to help out with expenses if we have travelled all over Europe. It's a help but we still need to pay much ourselves – the diesel for the camper and sometimes the plane tickets if I have to fly to the faraway races so I don't miss school."

"I actually got better at school this year – I used to hate it but I enjoy the studying more now. I've had to miss the Tuesday practices this year but maybe the school can find a way to let me free for that next year if the Dutch sport federation help out."

"I get four bikes from Suzuki Nederland and I get some help from Sylvain Geboers with a factory engine, handlebars and Kayaba suspension. I'm the youngest of the top riders so I'll stay one more year in 85 before I move to the four-stroke. I've already grown several centimetres this year. I'm about 1.60m tall and I weigh about 48kg so I think I will be ready for the four-stroke in 2009."

"I hope I can stay Suzuki too. They are awesome bikes and I already got to practice once on a 250F. I want to race it for one year in Holland before I go to the European championship and hopefully be in the GPs by the time I am 16 or 17."

Dad Peter, now a market trader, was the ultimate sand star of the late '70s, beating the factory boys year after year in the Sint Anthonis classic each March. His career actually carried on until Y2K when he scored the last of eight amateur titles with the MON, the Dutch partner of the AMCA. Apart from advising son Jeffrey to avoid the 'sandman' trap, Peter tries not to interfere.

"When he needs me I am there for him but I don't push him. I want to help but I don't like the way some dads try to control their kids. I think the kids can fix it alone. The kids have to want it themselves. When Jeffrey wants to ask my advice about the tracks or the bikes I will help but he has to stand on his own two feet."

ALEKSANDER TONKOV

Rushing Russian

The 14-year-old from Kungur in the Ural mountains has been living near Braunschweig in Germany with his mentor Sergey Garin, the first top Russian motocross immigrant to Germany in the '90s, for the last 12 months.

"I ride for a Russian club – Moto Club Ryasan – but I also have a German sponsor, De-Te-Ma. That means I am racing every weekend because, apart from the European series, I also race the German Youngsters Cup which I am leading despite missing a round and I fly back to Russia for the national series there too.

"The crowds are not so big for motocross near to Moscow and the big cities but in the provinces we still get 30,000 coming to watch the national championship, even the youth series. More and more youngsters start motocross every year now that there is more money."

Aleksander's double win at Faenza showed both his bravery and the speed of his bike – he took two holeshots and repassed Max Anstie downhill – but a seizure in the previous round proved costly as he lost the Euro title by just eight points despite the most podiums – 10 – and four wins, more than anyone bar Anstie.

Schooling does not interfere too much with his schedule. "I attend a private school with internet teaching but have to return to Russia four times a year for exams to check my progress. My German is getting better every week but we have quite a lot of Russian friends where I live."

Next year will probably see him move to MX2. "When I can adapt well, then I will also race the European series. I want to ride two-stroke the first two months to get used to the bigger machine, the extra power and the weight, then move on to the 250F."





KEN ROCZEN

King Ken

The world junior champ with two narrow victories over Anstie at Sevlievo in August has not contested the Euro series this year. Although only 13, he decided to go his own way and has been racing older kids on a 250F most of the summer.

"I didn't feel I had a lot of opposition in the 85 class in Germany and I didn't want the travelling for the Euro series again after doing it last year. Back in the winter we decided it would be cool for me to practice on a 250F and I felt at home straight away so I have ridden the Youngsters Cup in that class in Germany this year. I'm only 1.54m and 42kg but I don't have any problems – I have a smooth style, I don't fight the bike. I'm just a few points off the lead going into the last two rounds but even if I don't win it will be no disgrace. I'm the youngest by far."

Indeed, the older kids have not been exactly soft with the upstart. "That's true but I wouldn't have it any other way. I don't want to be treated differently just because I'm the youngest. I want to race and have fun. If they can pass me okay but

they should do it fairly. And if they don't, I guess I just have to live with it."

From Mattstedt near Apolda in the east of the country, Ken is only the second German ever to win a motocross world title – the other being Paul Friedrichs back in the days when the east was DDR.

So how was Sevlievo? "Really good and it was fun to race the 85s again as a one-off. I didn't know how I would get on after racing 250F all year but I had two good races with Max and came out on top. It was close both times and Max could afford to take more risks in the second moto but I held him off."

Next year? "I'm in the middle of a five-year contract with Suzuki but I hope we can continue together after that also. I think I will race the European MX2 series next year and after that I want to get into the GPs. And I want to go to America in the end but not until I have ridden a couple of years in the world championship. After that I think I will be ready."

JASON CLERMONT

Mr Consistent

Jason clinched the '07 Euro title through his consistency. The 15-year-old from Vay, about 20 kilometres from Nantes, only won two motos but was nine times on the podium in 16 races and only once outside the top six prior to the final decisive moto at Faenza on the only 150 Honda which was among the leaders every week.

In some ways it's a pity that Jason, who also won the Sunday Main on an 85 at Bercy last year, had to ride the four-stroke because the power bonus disguised his undoubted ability. "Honda France asked me to ride the 150 in the European championship to promote the bike. I am not allowed to ride it in the French championship so I have been switching backwards and forwards every week all summer. It is more difficult to adjust from the four-stroke to the two-stroke than vice-versa."

The hillside Faenza track emphasised the incompatibility of the 150 in the class – all of the Hondas were clearing the big step-up with ease but only the top six on 85s could make it and even then they had to get the approach perfect. On the downside even Jason needed all of his skill to match the lighter two-strokes on the tricky cambers.

The deciding moto also showed that the NGS teamster can keep his cool. Left at the start when he jammed the front wheel in the gate, Jason picked off the opposition without panic – a good sign for his future.

"Next year I will move up to the MX2 class but my birthday is first in July so I will have to race a 125 two-stroke until then." He also knows he must overcome another barrier. "It is a good atmosphere at the European championship races but the language barrier makes it difficult for me to mix with many of the other riders. I must work at my English."

And there is once last ride in the class ahead of him. "I am really looking forward to Bercy. I like supercross and it should be really exciting."

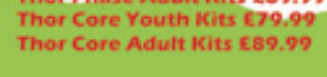


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MAX ANSTIE

Like father...

"What, me? Aggressive? No, I'm not. Of course I attack on the inside of turns if I have to but I don't do it because I want to take someone out. It's part of racing. If I take someone to the edge of the track, he's got the chance to back off or shoot off the track. That's his decision."

A chip off the old block, the 14-year-old from Newbury has won more races on 85s this year than anybody else but has narrowly missed the big titles. "I had a good race with Kenny at the world junior. It was good fun and we were battling it out all the way in both motos. It was really close but he came out just on top both times. It was a good track, we were both pushing as hard as we could and I learnt from it."

"You know, he's got factory support and he simply had the advantage going up the big hills there. I hung on as well as I could but horse power and weight are very important on a track like that in the 85 class at this level. I've had some real bad luck in the Europeans. At the first round I won the first moto, then I got a flat tyre in race two so we learnt from that and we run moussses now. Valkenswaard was good but at Markelo I went down hard at the first turn. I finally got a good

start but it was wet, someone lost it and I got torpedoed down the track but the killer was San Severino a fortnight ago."

"I was leading the series by then, by two points from Tonkov with Jeffrey third and Clermont fourth. It was a real horsepower track which made it difficult for us with the four-strokes at a real advantage. And on top of that they watered it loads to keep down the dust."

"I had concussion and don't remember what happened but one of the guys said I just slid out and high-sided as I tried to come through the pack from about 15th. I went out in race two to try to score points but I shouldn't have done really. When I got checked over properly by a doctor he said I had to lie down for 48 hours in a darkened room."

Third in the standings, Max was the winningest rider of the series with seven victories. "The championship has been a great learning experience. The 150s have a definite advantage on tracks like that but I'm not complaining. It just makes you work harder during the week. I think more of the British boys should come over and do some of the European rounds. That's the next step and you're only going to learn by racing different

people on different tracks – it would help them for the future to see what they will be facing when they finally do go abroad."

Racing again for Lionel Viaene with Rabbit Racing as tuners, Max is full supported by Kawasaki Europe who see the potential of securing top teenage talent for the future.

As well as winning races, Max is determined not to neglect his schooling. "Park House must be the coolest school in the world. It's a sport school and they support me in being able to get away for the races and my grades are holding up well. When I go away the teachers are really supportive and give me the work to take with me and they are pleased when I come back with all my work up to scratch."

Next year Max will hang around for another season in the hotly-contested 85s. "I'm still too small for the 125. I can ride it but I can't push it like I can the 85 and I think that is particularly important at my age because it is now that we are learning to ride properly and develop our skills. I think Roczen has moved up to the 250F a little bit early. We'll see if he gets bored when I thrash him at Bercyl!"

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JORDI TIXIER

The next Pourcel?

The 14-year-old from the southern outskirts of Paris, living not far from Livvy Lancelot, missed out on a top 10 ranking but was actually the highest scorer per contested race in the Euro series and confirmed his class with third in the world juniors.

"I broke my wrist at the start of the season so I only raced three rounds." But two top eights on his return in Dutch sand followed by podiums at both Italian rounds were impressive.

The kid just oozes class on a bike and has the background to go far. "I have assistance from KTM France and ride for Team Verhaege, one of the best teams in France. And Yannig Kervella, who was a top GP rider at the same time as Jacky Vimond, is my trainer."

And the French school has to be the best in the world. "We can race in France every week. We have an outdoor series and also a supercross championship over four rounds. We have the same sort of obstacles as the adults but we run separately and all of the obstacles are built smaller to suit the power of the smaller bikes. I think it is very good that we race supercross. It helps us a lot to learn the technique, both for jumping and also quick action. The races are very short – six or seven minutes – and you learn to be able to push hard straight out of the gate.

"I have not yet decided whether to stay 85 or move to 125 next year. I still have the choice and I am at a difficult age with physical growth at present."

For many Jordi is the next Pourcel with his graceful style and I even discovered an extra similarity to Cri when I asked about his '06 ranking in France. "Ninth. I crashed in a supercross and broke both wrists."

Just like the enfant terrible himself back in '04!



TOM KELLY

MX expat

Tom was not quite in the leading group but two fifth places – one in sand and one on an Italian expressway – show just how far the 14-year-old from Warrington, a good top tenner in the UK in '06, has benefitted from moving abroad to race this year.

"Me and my brother Jack, he's twelve, had a couple of races in Holland at the end of last year and we got the offer of sponsorship so we decided to give it a go. And we've had no regrets. The racing is harder, the competition is better, there's a lot more good tracks and the weather's a lot better too."

Dad Rob was actually one of the original schoolboy motocrossers but it was fate which got the Kellys on the dirt again. "We saw the marker signs for a local race on lamp posts and gates when we were setting off on a family holiday. We just took a detour and were hooked."

A broken forearm mid-summer while training with Jeff Herlings in France cost Tom a month's racing but he returned to make top 20 at the world juniors – "the big jumps and hard landings were painful" – and only just missed top 10 in the Euro championship with a series of surges through the pack.

"I'm over 50kg and am getting too big for the 85 so it's 50-50 I'll probably move to the 125 next year but I really want to stay racing in Holland. I've learnt so much this year."

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Steve Cox is an American moto-journalist who follows the entire AMA SX/MX tour. Since moving on from US weekly Cycle News he's struck out on his own to do the freelance thing and last year launched a new bi-weekly MX magazine – Motocross Illustrated – covering both AMA and GP action. He knows the sport and its personalities like few others and as our US Editor provides insight straight from the Stateside scene...

END GAME!

The AMA MX title goes down to the wire and when the fat lady sings at the 11th hour it's Grant Langston who's the last man standing

Heading into the AMA National season finale at Glen Helen, four riders have a shot at the championship – Timmy Ferry, Mike Alessi, Grant Langston and Andrew Short. However, just as in any championship, only one will leave with the #1 plate.

Alessi grabs the early lead in moto one when the few riders in front of him bobble in the second turn but he is quickly joined in a procession that includes Kevin Windham in second, GP contender (and British MX2 champ) Mike Brown in third, Short in fourth, Ferry in fifth and Langston in sixth. Title contenders Short, Ferry and Langston quickly dispatch of Brown while Windham works to pass Alessi out front.

On the 10th of 14 laps, while closer to Alessi than he has been in the entire race, Windham goes down at the base of Yamaha Hill and hands second place to Short.

"I fell at the bottom of Yamaha Hill over there," Windham says. "It claimed me, it claimed Ferry [earlier in the moto], it claimed Alessi [in the second moto] – all of us had our hands full with that corner. Laying on the ground watching the bikes

go by was frustrating."

Langston sits third at this point and over the next two laps passes Short and then Alessi in succession to take the moto lead as he gets the two-to-go board. Langston takes the moto win and puts his foot on the throat of the championship.

"I didn't want to sit back in fifth because I would've lost points," Langston admits. "I probably still would've had the lead but a 5-5 wouldn't have gotten it done. Once I got on a roll in that first moto I just got my finger out of my you know what and got going..."

"I didn't really panic. I just thought to myself how the points were working out and then thought 'this is your track, Grant – come on, get going'. Then I just put my head down and actually found my lines. At the beginning of the race I was making a lot of mistakes and searching for lines and once I started figuring out where I needed to go I was starting to figure out how to hit those lines harder and harder and since I was going slower at the beginning it made it easier to charge at the end. When you're passing people, your adrenaline gets

going. Adrenaline's worth about five horsepower, normally."

Alessi hangs on for second just in front of Short, Ferry and Windham, both of whom fall at the bottom of Yamaha Hill during the moto.

To clinch the championship all Langston needs is to finish ninth or better in moto two regardless of what anyone else does. Considering he hasn't finished worse than second in the previous eight motos the odds seem in his favour.

Again, though, Alessi grabs the early lead – and again he is chased by Windham. But this time it's Alessi's turn to crash at the bottom of Yamaha Hill which hands the lead to Windham and second to Langston. Alessi gets up third thanks in part to the electric start on his KTM, Short is fourth, Josh Hill is fifth and Troy Adams is sixth. Ferry finds his way into seventh by lap three.

Langston seems content to hang in second while Windham flat leaves everyone behind. "It was a no-pressure deal for me," Windham says. "It's a real legitimate possibility that this was my last moto and that that was my last lap. I was sitting ♦

NEWLY-CROWNED BRITISH MX2 CHAMP
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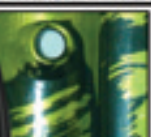
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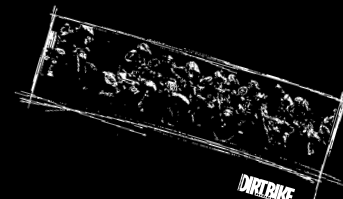
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WINDHAM WINS THE FINAL MOTOCROSS MOTO OF THE AMA NATS SEASON – BUT WILL IT BE K-DUB'S LAST NATIONAL?

MOTOCROSS

Final standings

1	Grant Langston	439 points
2	Mike Alessi	423
3	Andrew Short	421
4	Timmy Ferry	417
5	Kevin Windham	363
6	Ricky Carmichael	291
7	James Stewart	290
8	Michael Byrne	230
9	Gavin Gracyk	218
10	David Vuillemin	207

on the line thinking '35 minutes or roughly 12 laps and it could be over for ol' K-Dub'. I just gave it my all and it felt awesome. It felt great. The team's been working hard – the SoBe No Fear/Samsung Honda team – and to end it here is just incredible because there's some history here.

"I came back from my little hiatus at this race and the crowd went nuts for me then. That day didn't go as well as I wanted it to because I landed on a water barrier racing RC back in the day but nevertheless it's about the fans. When they get loud behind me there's nothing that can stop me."

Alessi makes a late-race move on Langston for second. "The second moto was a tougher one because K-Dub was riding really good and I don't think I was thinking too much about going for it," Langston says. "When K-Dub was pulling away I saw Mike coming behind me and at that point I wasn't going to fight him for it."

Windham wins the moto with apparent ease – which is how it normally looks for him – before taking a victory lap and grabbing third overall.

"The first thing that went through my head was 'look for the white flag'," Windham says. "I don't want to screw that up again and pull off a lap early. That was first and foremost. I had mixed emotions in making that [victory] lap because I didn't want to rain on the parade of the championship but I felt like I owed it to the guys and the fans that were hanging out all day with K-Dub signs and cheering me on. If this is in fact my last national I had to make the lap. It felt good. And the crowd definitely made it worth my while."

Alessi is second overall. "This is my third year going for the championship and it feels awesome," says Alessi. "I've established myself as one of the top guys in the class and today was awesome."



MIKE ALESSI NAILS DOWN SECOND IN THE MOTOCROSS DIVISION

So Langston wins the overall and the championship. Coincidentally, the last rider not called Ricky Carmichael to win this championship before Langston was another South African – Greg Albertyn.

"It's definitely a great feeling," Langston grins. "We didn't get off to the start we wanted in the season and I think about five rounds ago we were still sitting sixth in the points. I didn't really think there was any hope in hell that we'd be here. But then we got the new bike and started enjoying it more and

riding it better and it was kind of a snowball effect.

"Ricky went into retirement and James got hurt so we just did everything we could. Even at that point I was still quite a few points back but every week I just kept chipping away. Three wins in a row at the end of the season obviously helps out a tremendous amount and I'm obviously really stoked to have accomplished this.

"I never would've expected it coming into the season but it was the nicest gift I could've ever asked for."



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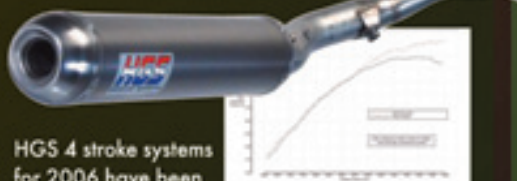


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BACK-TO-BACK

Villopoto makes it two on the bounce

Following the Texas round, where Ben Townley lost significant ground to his team-mate Ryan Villopoto in the championship chase, the odds of him landing the AMA Lites crown seem slim at Glen Helen. And the odds are made slimmer by the fact that Glen Helen is one of Villopoto's best tracks on the circuit.

Townley gets off to the early lead in both motos but in moto one he immediately has rival Villopoto on his tail. Within a few laps Villopoto makes his move by Townley and the race for the lead is effectively over. Villopoto wins the moto going away over Townley and their other team-mate Brett Metcalfe and extends his points lead to 22 with only one moto remaining. Basically, for Townley to win the title he needs a DNF from Villopoto and then he needs to win the final moto.

Townley again jumps out to an early lead in moto two but this time he has Trey Canard between himself and Villopoto and he begins to put time on the field. By the time Villopoto gets into second on lap two Townley is well out of reach. Villopoto sits back in second and takes second overall, along with his second AMA National title in a row.

"I always heard that it's harder to back it up and I think it is," admits Villopoto. "Mitch [Payton, of Pro Circuit] said at the semi that he hasn't seen two guys go at it harder in a long time. It's always been pretty easy for Ricky to win a championship and he never had somebody as close as me and Ben. Every weekend it was me and Ben. It was definitely harder than last year."

Townley has to settle for the consolation prize – the final overall win of the season. "Definitely winning the overall today was good but the whole year was a bit of a consolation on last year," Townley says. "I won that supercross championship and I raced Ryan all the way to the finish in this outdoor championship and it's what I've said from the get-go, that I wanted to fight for this championship. It's been a great year and a huge improvement from last year."

For the third time in the 2007 outdoor season (and fourth time this year) the Pro Circuit team sweeps the podium with Metcalfe holding onto third in both motos.

"It's an awesome achievement to be a part of," Metcalfe says. "It's very rare for a team to pull that off. It's nice to be in the record books with these guys."



BT WINS AT GLEN HELEN BUT THE TITLE GOES TO HIS TEAM-MATE VILLOPOTATO



I WISH THEY ALL COULD BE CALIFORNIAN GIIRLIIIIIRLS!

LITES

Final standings

1	Ryan Villopoto	544 points
2	Ben Townley	525
3	Josh Grant	346
4	Jason Lawrence	277
5	Ryan Dungey	267
6	Jake Weimer	255
7	Brett Metcalfe	242
8	Tommy Hahn	220
9	Martin Davalos	203
10	Brock Tickle	201



VILLOPOTO LOOKALIKE ADAM CHATFIELD MAKES THE MOST OF BEING A VILLOPOTO LOOKALIKE! SKILLS ADAM...



CREEK SPEAK!

Our industry insider reports back from the MXdN where he gets his fill of twigs and berries, watches his buddy Timmy do the business, meets a GP legend and then insults a Kiwi hero. Good work Canadian bloke!

Words by STEVE MATTHES Photo by ALISA NANCE

As I write this I have just returned home from the Motocross des Nations (I'm not calling it the Motocross OF Nations, I just refuse to and if you don't like it get your own column in DBR!) which was held for the second time ever in the United States of America. Wow! What an event. It was just really cool to see the different riders and teams over here racing for the right to be called the fastest motocross country. The race was held at Budds Creek in Maryland and when the AMA Nationals rolled around earlier in the year there was non-stop moaning about the track from almost everybody.

Y'see, the riders over here are used to the tracks getting churned up before the race, usually some woodchips or sand is dropped onto the surface and then it's watered a ton. And then watered again for good measure. The track never gets very muddy because the dirt is just deep and loose. So back to my story, the riders showed up at Budds in June and it was hard and fast. There was very little discing of the dirt and nothing to get it rough. RC went off on the track complaining that everybody was wide open, there was nothing to separate the riders and it was too fast with an unfair start. The riders were told that it was the FIM's directions for the track to be left like that and it will be this way at the MXdN.

Fast forward to this past weekend and when I walked over to look at the track it was USA style baby! Not sure what made Greg Atkins (FIM track guru) change his mind but I swear the first thing I thought of was how this was going to play right into Team USA's hands. Antonio Cairoli, the MX2 champion, said as much in a Racer X interview when he admitted that he wasn't used to this type of track and, trust me folks, he wasn't talking about the jumps. Cairoli's ride this past weekend was probably the weekend's greatest disappointment. All of us had heard about him and his speed, I spoke with a few American industry people that had gone over to some GPs and told me that it was going to be a battle with USA's Ryan Villopoto for top dog in MX2.

But first his bike was held up in customs due to some unauthorized food being in there (if his bike hadn't made it I would not want to be the mechanic that put that in there!) Once he got his bike and hit the track on Saturday for timed practice I watched him almost the whole time and knew that he wouldn't have anything for RV. He just didn't flow well, too much stop and go in the turns and he just didn't look comfortable as his comments after the race indicated. You could see that he had style and he looked like he could really throw the bike around in the air but he was well off the pace this weekend.

After Saturday when Team USA's Ricky Carmichael, Tim Ferry and Villopoto all won their qualifying races by 20-plus seconds, pretty much everybody in the paddock knew this was going to be a cakewalk and it was. The only saving grace for the rest of the world would be if somebody fell or had a mechanical problem. Oh wait, they did fall – RC and Ferry both had crashes that caused them to be dead last on the opening lap. RC worked his way back up to third and Ferry fourth. Never mind the part about the crashes. I'm not American but, to

be honest, I wanted the Americans to win – after all my buddy Timmy Ferry was on the team and I'm a big fan of his. I did want to see a race however. Just maybe, somehow, USA would have it come down to the last moto?

Alas, it was not to be as USA had a score of eight and the next closest was France with a 32. Ryan Villopoto stole the show as he won both of his motos on a 250F, something that's never been done before. He was a machine, his lead after one lap in the MX1/MX2 moto was six seconds! It was a ride that anybody who was there won't forget. Well, maybe some of the campers that were still passed out won't remember but whatever.

Here are some other observations from the MXdN...

Your team of Tommy Searle, Billy Mac and James Noble did well. Noble had his problems but Searle looked really good in getting second OA in the MX2 class. One thing I don't understand is that earlier in the year Billy Mac was quoted in an interview that he was very happy that the Scottish national anthem was played when he was on the podium. So he's Scottish! Why does Scotland not have a team (because they're part of Great Britain – SL)? And wasn't the 1994 team that won the MXdN called England (nope – SL)? Why is it called Great Britain now (it always has been – SL)? As a Canadian living in

I saw some video from the campground on Saturday night and I think Americans need to be more confident in their sexuality. I saw two naked Brits get accosted by some guys simply for the fact that they were naked. It's like haven't these people ever watched some football? That's what you guys do when you get drunk, you strip down and run around with your twig and berries showing. It's a strange custom to be sure but at least the Americans could respect it. I also saw a guy wearing nothing but a skirt get roughed up by some guys after he did a handstand. Judging by his accent, he was also a Brit. The best part was when the tough guy got in his face – he headbutted him! Classic!

Team New Zealand had a race to forget, the one country that people thought could maybe knock off the Americans were short-handed to start with when Josh Coppins pulled out due to a shoulder injury. Then on Saturday Ben Townley crashed and had to withdraw as well. To make things even worse, Coppin's replacement Darryl Hurley knocked himself silly in the next practice after BT! Only Cody Cooper remained and because they couldn't field two healthy riders they were DQ'd. I do have to say that the Kiwis did win the afterparty however. They defiantly drowned their sorrows. Coppins and I bonded by him telling me that my DBR columns aren't as funny as my

'The Kid' is stoked to meet Steve (left) and Racer X's invisible double monocle-wearing Jason Weigandt



America, I want answers (I've just given you them – SL)!

My team of Canucks did pretty good also with a 10th OA finish. The best ever for Canada was eighth when the USA didn't show one year so getting 10th with the Americans there was pretty good. We sent Jean-Sebastian Roy, Blair Morgan and Colton Facciotti. Colton was our best rider getting a fifth OA in the MX2 class. The Canadian guys were hurt by the normally reliable Blair Morgan pulling out of both motos with a hurt ankle and head.

Racer X ones and me asking him if he is the rider who blew the biggest points lead in GP history!

I met GP legend Eric Geboers. As this photo illustrates, I was very excited to have met him. He told me after he won Glen Helen in 1990 he "pulled the keys out of the ignition". I dunno what that means but it sounds cool.

All in all it was a great event and I have to find out some way to get to Ireland next year.

Sean, are you listening?



Adam Jones grabs freestyle gold
at the Summer X Games



GOLD DIGGER!

X Games winner Adam Jones is the current king of freestyle – and he's coming to the UK soon...

Words by Steve Cox Photos by Steve Cox and Frank Hoppen

IT USED to be that if you talked about a 'Mr Jones' in freestyle motocross you had to be talking about 'Mad' Mike Jones. But Mad Mike hasn't competed in quite a while and now there's a new Jones who's achieved something his veteran namesake never did – that's winning

a Summer X Games Freestyle Gold Medal.

And soon 23-year-old Adam Jones will be showing off his skills in the UK on the Crusty Demons Unleashed Tour. We caught up with Adam just as he returned from a grocery store in Southern California...

DBR: You raced motocross previous to turning to freestyle. Can you take us through your racing career?

AJ: "Actually, from when I first started riding jumping was always my favourite part of racing. Even before I started racing I used to like to find stuff to jump that was probably so small but I thought it was huge back in the day. That was always my favourite part. I raced from about 10 to 17. I always did well racing until I moved up to the A class probably the last year I raced and maybe I was nervous or something because I seemed to crash a lot and have real bad results."

"Around the same time I had an offer from a friend to go jump a ramp so I was like 'all right, I'll go jump a ramp'. I tried it and I picked it up pretty good. Back in the day my family used to be friends with 'Mad' Mike and his family [no relation] and he kind of lined me up with the old IFMA events and I did a couple and did all right so after three of them I kept getting invited back but then I broke my leg and I was out for a while. I came back in even better than I left though."

DBR: What do you think are the advantages and

disadvantages of being skinny like you in FMX?

AJ: "The main thing with me is that I'm really flexible. That's really been my main concern with not wanting to bulk up or anything because my flexibility I think is the best part about my riding. I can get through the bars really easy and when I really extend a trick, my whole body can just kind of curve. I like the way it looks. There are a lot of guys out there that are thicker and they're not able to curve their bodies like me. It just looks different. That helps me for sure. But the only thing that sucks about being a skinnier guy is that there's not as much padding if you wreck."

DBR: You're really known for your trick extension. Is there special training you do for that, like yoga or something?

AJ: "No, I basically just ride. If I don't ride for a while it's pretty hard for me to get over the bars and stuff like that. I should stretch a lot more than I do but I guess I just forget about it most of the time. On event day or on a lot of practice days I'll at least do a little stretching before I ride. I do have bad shoulders, though, so I always try to hit the gym and work my shoulders to keep

them strong. It's kind of preventative maintenance. It's not necessary in freestyle to do that kind of stuff, I'm just trying to stay out of trouble."

DBR: When Travis Pastrana was doing freestyle all of the time there was a lot made about his training because of the pace that he would do his runs.

AJ: "It's not hard or tiring in the classic sense but it's surprising the amount of energy it takes. There's something about it because you're biting your nails the whole time and you almost hold your breath the whole time. It's a really intense minute-and-a-half. It's not like you need to go training for it but I could run as fast as I wanted to on a treadmill for a minute-and-a-half and not get as tired as I do in a freestyle run. But that definitely had to help him because if I pinned it around the track as fast as he does I'd be winded by the end of my run."

DBR: Speaking of Pastrana, there have been times when it seemed a lot of people didn't think he won competitions that he ended up



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winning and you were on the losing end of something like that at the Big Air event at X Games where you got the silver this year to Kyle Loza's body varial. What do you think about that stuff?

AJ: "I don't know, I thought Big Air fell pretty much the way it should've been. The judges did a really good job on that. Loza's trick may not have looked that gnarly but it was gnarly. How many years ago did Chuck [Caruthers] do a body varial? And how many people have touched it since then? Mine was a new flip combo but it was still a flip combo.

"I respect Pastrana a lot for what he's done in this sport and I don't mean to dog him because he's innovated three-quarters of the stuff we do in our runs now. But there have been runs that

I've watched that he hasn't won but he won anyways. In the X Games at the Coliseum he did the 360 and that was gnarly but I think he would have to admit himself that the rest of his run was not that good. Nate [Adams] had a really good run that year and I think Nate should've won that year. I'm sure there's been other times. That's just the problem with freestyle – sometimes it's just more of a Best Trick event than an overall freestyle."

DBR: It seems like all of the tricks that, say, five years ago were good by themselves are now being done upside-down. Why is that?

AJ: "I think about that all the time and it's just getting more and more like that. You now have a full freestyle run upside-down now, you know?

DBR: I did notice at X though that you probably had less upside-down tricks than anyone else – and you won.

AJ: "I do that on purpose, too. A lot of people in this flip culture have just kind of forgot all about regular tricks. Flip tricks aren't that hard. They're tough but it's like you flip – that's good – and then you do the trick and then you're dialed. But the tricks by themselves take a lot of work and a lot of effort to make them really good. I did that on purpose.

"I had more flip tricks that I could've done but I didn't want to. I wanted to keep my run looking pretty cool and not overload it with upside-down variations that are similar. I'd rather have a little bit of everything in my run. I'd like to hope that it paid off, even if



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it's just one time. That's cool with me."

DBR: What was that like to actually receive the gold medal in front of more than 100 million people on TV?

AJ: "It's hard to even explain what it was like. I don't even know that I knew that it was real until two weeks down the road. I don't even know if I still know it's real. Coming into the event I knew I had two new tricks and I knew that I had a chance to win this but knowing that you have a chance and then actually doing it are two completely different things. It was awesome when it finally happened but I don't even really know how to explain it. All I can say is that I don't know, really, if you can't tell."

"It's something that I never really expected to do and I thought if I ever did do it that it would be cool but it's so much more than that. For that one minute, even though it's over now, for that one minute people thought of me as the best freestyler in the world for that day. That day I was. It's really cool. But I don't like to think about it that much because the last thing I need is to get a big head. It's kind of cool to think that. I came home, threw my medal in the closet and I haven't seen it since."

DBR: That's crazy because Ricky Carmichael said his X Games gold medal meant more to him than anything he'd ever accomplished.

AJ: "Really? Well, it's definitely the most important thing I've ever done in my career but I just don't want to get too comfortable with it

because it's hard to stay on top in this game for us. Not that racing's not. I'm not saying racing's not. But who knows what the next trick's going to be and if I'm going to be able to do it or not? I'm pumped on it while it lasts."

DBR: Where do you think the progression is taking you guys?

AJ: "I don't know, man. I honestly have no idea. It is probably going to any place you think it's not going."

DBR: There was a rumour going around before X that Bilko [Blake Williams] was planning to do a front flip at X before he got hurt.

AJ: "I heard that rumour too but he was hurt well before X Games. He hurt himself at the first round of Dew [the Dew Action Sports Tour]. Somebody made that rumour up to get ratings or something. I think it's going to be a while before you see a front flip but I shouldn't say that because now it's probably going to happen tomorrow."

DBR: Have you thought about it at all?

AJ: "I've thought about it – not to really try it but I've thought about if it's a real possibility to work it out in my head."

DBR: With a foam pit it seems anything's possible these days...

AJ: "I don't really like foam pits. I learned the basic back flip in a foam pit but I've never learned a flip trick in a foam pit. I think nobody

should be able to learn flip tricks in foam pits. I think it's bulls**t. It's stupid. Unless it's something completely groundbreaking that you're really not sure if it's going to work or not I don't see why you just can't baby-step it on dirt. That's what I've done. I've done three tricks that nobody's done before and I learned them all on dirt. You just have to take your time."

DBR: "So do your tricks seem more valid because you had such a penalty to try them in the first place?"

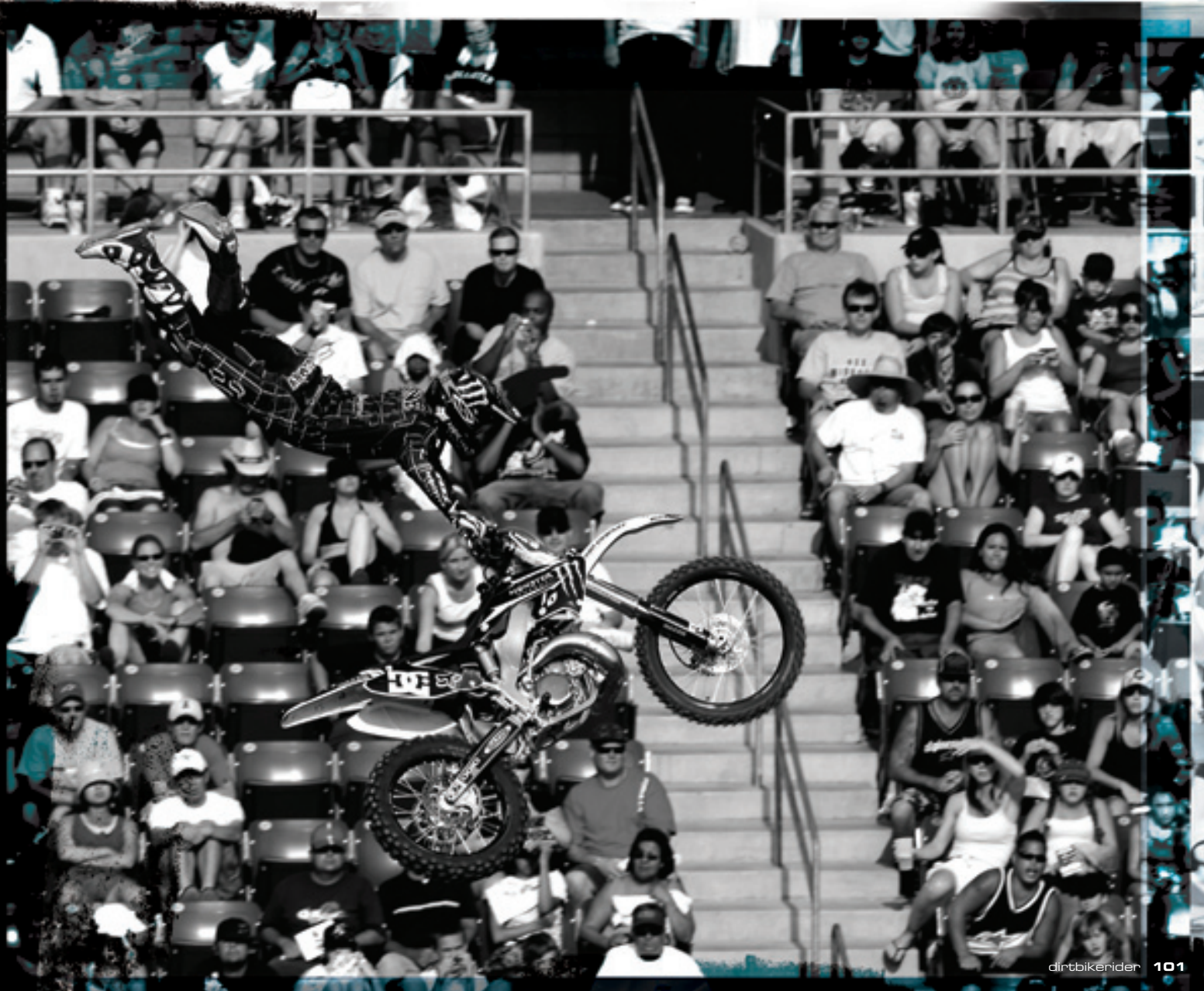
AJ: "Yeah. How hard is it to learn any trick in the foam? I don't do seat-grab flips and I can't do seat-grab flips but if you threw me in a foam pit, I can guarantee you I could figure them out on the first day because there's really no consequence. If we're going to ride freestyle and claim to be gnarly, what's the point in having a foam pit? Why don't we make cranes so that we can't fall when we're practising?"

DBR: Do like trapeze artists with the harness on your belt?

AJ: "Yeah and if you screw up you just pull a wire and 'boom' you're all right."

DBR: It seems like you're a lot more hardcore than people give you credit for...

AJ: "I think so. Me and Nate [Adams] talk about this a lot that we'll never be given credit for it. But that's all right, I don't need credit for being hardcore, I just want credit for being good at what I do."





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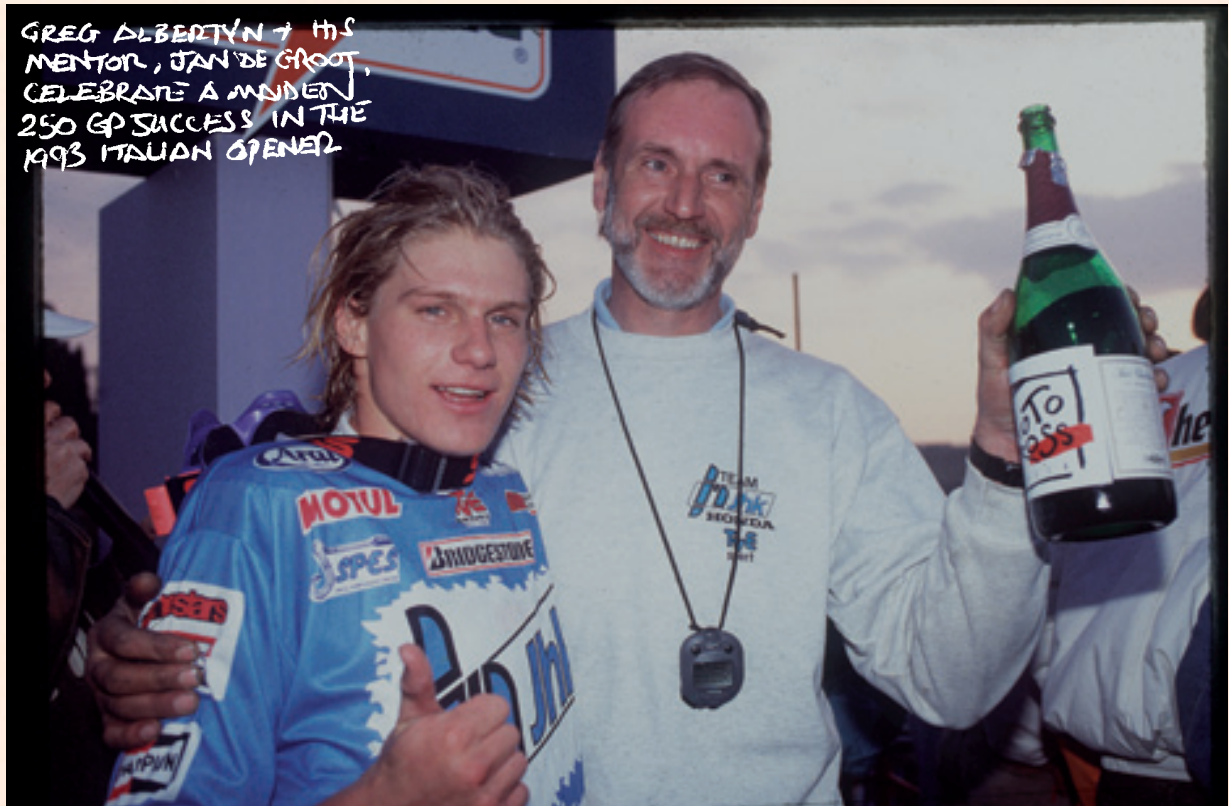
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ALBERTYN SNOOK
TAKES THE 250 GP
ESTABLISHMENT
WITH HIS WIN AT
THE OPENING GP
IN ITALY 1993



Virgin Victors!

Hot on the heels of Tony Cairoli's first-time-out MX1 win, Jack looks back on some other dazzling debuts...



GREG ALBERTYN + HIS MENTOR, JAN DE GROOT, CELEBRATE A MAIDEN 250 GP SUCCESS IN THE 1993 ITALIAN GP

HAVING DOMINATED the MX2 world championship, astonishing little Italian Antonio Cairoli debuted in MX1 at Donington Park and simply blew away the established title contenders.

Tony tested a 450 Yamaha on the Wednesday after his championship-clinching ride in Northern Ireland and was still getting the hang of the thing at the British Grand Prix. He qualified 12th, placed third in morning warm-up and followed home winner Kevin Strijbos in race one. Then he trounced 'the Kid' and his fellow world championship wannabes in a spectacular second moto to seize a maiden MX1 victory.

Only the very great do this. And (the greatest of all – SL) Stefan Everts actually did it twice!

In 1998, en-route to losing a hotly contested 250 GP series to Sebastian Tortelli, Everts wild-carded in the Belgian 500 GP at his beloved Namur and won both motos, beating title rivals Peter Johansson and Joel Smets. Five years earlier, Everts had arrived in 250 GPs as Suzuki's reigning 125 world champion and promptly won the opening round at Valkenswaard. But 12 months later Stefan was on the receiving end!

His successor as 125 world champ was a blond, carefree South African called Greg Albertyn. 'Albee' arrived for the opening 250 GP of 1993 at Castiglione del Lago in Italy and while Everts won the first moto, Greg and his Jan de Groot Honda fought impressively to the front of the next two. Stefan, visibly miffed on the podium, had to settle for second overall behind the debut boy...

Third on the rostrum, defending champ Donny Schmit offered Albertyn a shake of the hand. "I didn't expect you up front at the first GP," admitted the sporting American graciously.

Similarly, tearaway Italian Alex Puzar – having unluckily lost the 125 GP title chase of '89 – spectacularly crushed the 250 opposition in round one of the 1990 series at Schwanenstadt in Austria with an emphatic double victory on Michele Rinaldi's Chesterfield Suzuki. A similarly flamboyant force to Cairoli, 'Crazy Horse' Puzar simply carried over his extravagant, full-on 125 riding style and proceeded to steamroller the next three 250 GPs, winning seven out of the first eight motos en route!

There is, of course, an exception to every rule... Leon Giesbers had made very little impact on either 125 or 250 world championships in the early '90s. Then in 1996 the arrogant, accomplished Dutchman wild-carded in his home 500 GP at Lierop and trounced his big bike brethren to record the only grand prix victory of a modest career!

A full 12 years before Giesbers' unexpected victory, both 125 and 250cc world champions of 1983 moved simultaneously into the 500 class on full-blooded factory bikes. Georges Jobe had won a second 250 title with Suzuki and was hired by Alec Wright at Team Green. And fresh from a double 125 world triumph, also with Suzuki, the original 'Kid' (now Suzuki's GP team manager) Eric Geboers joined Andre Malherbe, Dave Thorpe and Andre Vromans in a truly titanic Honda Racing

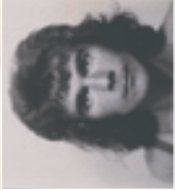


SCHWANENSTADT, 1984. + GEORGES JOBE WINS HIS FIRST EVER 500 GP AS 250 WORLD CHAMP

Corporation squad.

Also entering 500 GPs was 1982 world 250 champion and '83 runner-up Danny LaPorte, the dashing, bright-eyed Californian on a rather less user-friendly YZ490 air-cooled Yamaha alongside defending 500 champion Hakan Carlqvist. And following three years in 250 GPs with Yamaha, Dave Watson had joined Team Green with SM Racing aboard an updated '83 works bike. Also, Shaun Simpson's dad Willie – after his maiden Maico-mounted 250 GP season – entered the big bike fray on a Heron Suzuki, sporting the number 34 still favoured by his son!

All congregated at Schwanenstadt for the opening skirmish of 1984. During technical control the Japanese were falling over each other photographing opposition bikes, though the factory Suzukis were glaringly absent having skulked off at the



was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera. After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

JACK BURNICLE is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid. At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked. Next time he went he

Jack Burnicle

Jack Burnicle

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ALL ITALIAN EYES ON ALEX PUZAR AS HE MUSTERED TO HIS SECOND SUCCESSIVE 250 GP WIN AT MAGGIORA IN 1990



PUZAR POWERED TO FOUR SUCCESSIVE 250 GP VICTORIES AT THE START OF 1990

end of their unsuccessful 1983 title defence!

Up until now a 250 GP venue, Schwanenstadt evoked mixed reactions among the big boys. "Too short and too narrow," snorted 'Carla'. "Many places have only one line and it's difficult to pass. Not a grand prix course!" I personally thought Schwanenstadt was a fabulous track which ultimately hosted a thrilling MX des Nations in 1993 and Carla belied his own verdict with a raging first race recovery from 36th to fourth!

His semi-works team-mate LaPorte was a mite more generous. "The track's a bit narrow in places but fun to ride," grinned 'The Door'. "I can't wait to get out there." Needless to say Georges Jobe, winner of the Austrian 250 GP here in 1981, loved the joint!

Thorpe was concerned about the freakish sheer climb right off the start, leaping up over a wide, blind ridge. "This is the first GP and a lot of these blokes haven't a brain," muttered 'DT'. "They only start thinking when they're lying in a hospital bed!"

Other Brits included sturdy Ulsterman Laurence Spence on a Kawasaki while KTM had recruited Kurt Nicoll and Honda legend Graham Noyce.

During practice Geboers survived a huge crash, coming such a livid purler that Thorpe stopped "to see if he was still alive!" Riders made a vain pre-race attempt to have the first corner changed back to the wider, simpler sweep it had been for previous 250 GPs. But the sinuous chicane remained, pointing anyone not on the single racing groove at a solid wall of straw bales. And that is exactly where most of the main men landed up...

Jobe and Geboers, together with Thorpe and Watson, were the only top guys to miss the mayhem and Eric ran off with his first 500 GP moto ahead of Thorpe in a Honda one-two with Jobe third, Carla a simply incredible fourth, Watson fifth and Vromans sixth.

The top 10 was rounded out by first-turn



REIGNING WORLD 250 CHAMP GEORGES JOBE SOARS TO AUSTRIAN SUCCESS IN OPENING 500GP OF 1984

victims LaPorte, Spence and Malherbe. Nicoll placed 12th but 28-year-old Noyce went out with front fork problems.

"I'd just like it known that certain members of this team do refer to this man as 'Pop' due to age and heart condition," Kurt had quipped on Saturday night. But 'Rolls Noyce' responded bravely in race two.

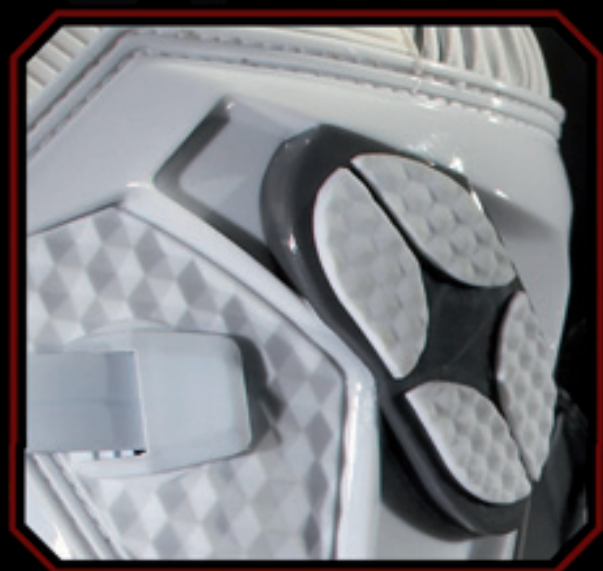
So too, as against Neil Hudson in 1981, did Jobe. 'Gorgeous Georges' leapt to the front ahead of a battle between old foes Carlqvist and Noyce. Graham fell and dropped back to finish eighth as Carla blazed to second ahead of Thorpe, Geboers, Larry Spence, Vromans and Watson.

With Noyce, Nicoll and Willie Simpson all

scoring points it proved a good race for the Brits. But the man of the moment was Jobe, overall winner in a grippingly close contest. Georges scored 35 points to claim 500 GP honours first time out ahead of fellow new boy Geboers on 33, Thorpe on 32 and Carlqvist on 30.

Jobe subsequently also won round two – his second ever 500 GP – at Payerne in Switzerland ahead of Malherbe and Thorpe and proved to be eventual champ Malherbe's closest challenger throughout the season.

But Puzar and Albertyn would go one better – world champions in their debut 250 GP seasons of 1990 and 1993. I'm convinced that Cairoli could do the same!



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Drew who?

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Neil Drew is a former MX and enduro racer and a qualified sports mind coach. At present he is coaching two national champions and several GP competitors and has helped many amateur and professional athletes from all over the world. He can be contacted via DBR or through his website at www.competitionmind.co.uk

TARGET PRACTICE!

One of the keys to success is setting yourself attainable targets so this month we're talking about how you can make the difference between winning and losing.

Words by Neil Drew

SO, YOU'RE either at the end of the season and thinking about next year or you might be beginning a winter series. What happens next year depends on a number of factors, one of which is how you think and what targets you set yourself – in other words, your goals...

What is a goal? Well it's a target, it's something that focuses our attention, it creates motivation and drive. And a goal will help us to push past our own boundaries and is essential in many ways. Usually at this stage I will always ask the guys that I work with what they have learnt this year, what they could do differently next year and then we talk about the all-important subject of goals.

Many people mock the setting of goals but if you think about it there isn't a single successful business out there that doesn't set a goal – it is one of the foundations of success. One of the favorite analogies that I use is this – if an airplane takes off from Heathrow heading for New York and it's roughly one degree out it will end up in Florida. So how does it get to its destination? It monitors where it is at any given point and checks to see if it's where it should be. When they take off they know how long they want the journey to be, they know the route, they know where the destination is in relation to where they are at any given point, they know what fuel they need to get them there and so on.

Setting our goals isn't any different from an airliner. We know where we are now, we decide where we want to be, we think about what we need to get us there whether it is equipment, technical training, diet or physical fitness or some other resource that we have lacked in the past and need to improve on.

Those of you who have done some business training will be familiar with the good old SMART goals – Specific, Measurable, Achievable,

Reasoned and Timed. Well that does work but we need to be even clearer than that. I want you to follow this process so grab a pen and paper – even if you don't race and you're a parent this will help you at the very least to help your young one get their goals in place.

The first thing you need to do is to be really honest with yourself about what you have achieved in this current year.

Then you have to be even more honest about what excuses you have made and write them down.

What did you need this year that would have made a difference? This can be anything from a materialistic or physical point of view, in fact any point of view.

Write them down.

Now, what do you want to achieve next year? This is real important – your goal needs to be such that it is achievable. Some people set goals so massive that as soon as they fail they hit the mind catastrophe, give up and then view everything as impossible. It's okay to set your target so that it is higher than this year's achievements but it must be attainable and if needs be you can change it in the season to something even higher. If you set your target as just one place higher than you finished this year then that doesn't really motivate so avoid playing safe – unless, of course, you finished in the top five. In other words challenge yourself without setting yourself up for self-sabotage. Write it down and be very specific about it.

What is the first thing you are going to do to start achieving your goal and when will you start doing it? Write it down listing everything that's relevant.

What don't you know how to do, how will you find the answers and by when? Write it down.

What don't you have that you need materialistically, how will you get it and by when? Write it down.

What other resources and skills will you need to help you get your goal? Where and how will you get them and by when? Write them all down.

Will anyone else be affected by you achieving this goal – in other words are you likely to meet any resistance. Then ask yourself the ways that you can either include them or get their support or set aside time for them so that they are included in your life in some way and that a balance is achieved to eliminate any guilt and therefore avoid self-sabotage. Write it all down.

What will achieving this goal really mean to you? What reasons do you have for achieving it – really think hard about this and make your goals so you feel motivated to achieve them. Write it all down.

Will you enjoy the challenge of achieving this goal?

Is this for you? This goal must be for you – it's pointless setting it for someone else's benefit or because it's what someone else wants you to achieve unless you have established first and foremost that it is what you want and the other person or persons are in total agreement and support.

When is this going to happen as in when will you know you have achieved this goal? Set a specific date. Write it down.

Now write down all of the people you need to speak to, all of the things that you need, compile a complete list to work to that will help keep you focused and organised. Include completion dates



and any other relevant details. Some people dislike lists and fly by the seat of their pants leaving everything to the last minute and then get into a blind panic. Either get used to using this idea or devise your own system that works for you.

I'm not suggesting that all of you will achieve all of your goals and that it's all going to be roses down the garden path but you stand a much better chance of achieving what you want if you know where you're going, what you need to get there and what you are going to do along the way than if you just ambled along saying I'm going to ride in such and such competition and

would like to finish in, say, the top 10.

The above isn't the full way of setting goals but it is a great concise way that still works well if you put in the effort. The secret to getting the best from it is to write out the answers and then review it and write it out almost in a story fashion and then monitor it – but be flexible to avoid sabotage, keep your lists of items and resources required and get busy organising them.

To the unconverted and determined idiots it could seem corny but it isn't any different from what the successful person or business does. Even when you enter a competition, getting there is a goal with the preparation of the bike,

transport, entries, kit, route there, time to set out, time to arrive, food, money and so on.

Take your time with this and really think about it. You will be surprised at the people who already do this – I have two national champions, several grand prix riders and a host of other club level riders and competitors who do their goals with me every year because they know the power behind them and the drive that it creates.

And if it's good enough for them, it's certainly good enough for you...

But remember, the most important thing is to enjoy your sport – on its own this creates better results.

REDHEADS AND REDNECKS!

Words and photos by Sully

Tea Ginner – or Tea USA as they're officially known – dominate the Motocross des Nations at Budds Creek to lift the Peter Chaiberlain cup for the 18th time...

THE WRITING'S already on the wall when Team USA's trio of tenacious throttle jockeys go 1-1-1 in their Saturday qualification heats and Sunday's beatdown is equally as vicious with the second placed team – that's France – ending up a massive 26 points back come the end of play.

But unlike Team America, Saturday doesn't start so well for the Brits. Tommy's bike's stuck somewhere in customs thanks to the Italian team's insatiable need for home-grown food and Noble dislocates his shoulder in a horrendous get-off on a downhill triple. "I landed in a hole or soft spot or something and my hand came off the bars – I went down hard."

Back down in Pit Lane it's visibly obvious that James is in copious amounts of pain as a mustachioed medic probes his right shoulder to figure out the extent of the damage. While there may be nowt broke the soft tissue damage is serious enough to detune James to the point where Team GB is essentially a two-man team.

But the Brits have got it cushy compared to the Kiwis as there's only one man standing come the qualifiers. Aside from the Kiwis every major team you'd expect to make it through to the A-Final does and the stage is set for the 61st running of the Motocross des Nations.

With most of the 20 qualified teams – bar Germany – giving first pick of the gate to the MX2 guys it's mostly 250F riders who start on the inside of the starter's box in the opening MX1/MX2 moto. And as the gate drops it's Villopoto who gets the jump, drifts right to block off the competition and tangles with Australia's Andrew McFarlane

who goes down collecting Gareth Swanepoel and Tony Cairoli too.

Even with time lost in the collision Ryan's got a bike length on his MX2 competition and he's only one back on MX1 rider Nagl as they enter turn one. But as Max outbrakes himself and runs wide, Villopoto dives under the German KTM star to come out of turn one in the lead. And if that's not amazing enough what Ryan does next is astounding.

Gapping the competition by over five seconds in the first lap, the current AMA Lites champ increases his lead further and further until he's around 20 seconds out front with only three laps done!

And behind the Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki teamster – once Nagl's 450 KTM has split its hydraulic clutch hose – is Tommy Searle who's holding off a snarling pack of 450s which includes riders of the calibre of David Philippaerts, Steve Ramon, Chad Reed, Sebastien Pourcel and his British team-mate Billy MacKenzie.

While Billy slips backwards to 11th due to a dose of the dreaded arm pump, Tommy's holding down second until Reed – who needs to lay off the pies and Castlemaine XXXX if he's gonna challenge Bubba indoors next season – makes an aggressive move, crossing at least three ruts to T-bone Tommy. "He just plain took me out," tells Tommy later. "It's not as though I was even holding him up, he would close but I could drop him too – we'd been doing that for half the race!" Searle loses another four places while restarting his KTM to Philippaerts, Pourcel, Jonathan Barragan and Carmichael before getting going again. ►





The stand-out star of the '07 MXdN is Ryan Villopoto who becomes the first baby-bore bike rider to win both his races against the big boys

Oh yeah, the GOAT! Where the hell has he been? "I got a good start but I came into the second turn and two guys stopped and I stopped and got rear ended by somebody," reckons RC. "By the time I got going again the leaders were gone." Back in 23rd place at the end of lap one Ricky does what Ricky does best and charges all the way to third – behind the unpopular Aussie Reed (boo hiss) – before running out of laminated tear-offs and running out of time.

Amazingly, Villopoto's lead is over 30 seconds before he backs off the throttle to cruise home for victory ahead of Reed, RC and the Euros. With the first three finishers all being AMA regulars the Yank fans are full of it chanting "USA! USA! USA!" until their faces are almost as red as the stripes on Old Glory.

Less than one hour later the MX2 riders are back on the line, this time ready to battle it out with the Open class warriors. Again, it's Villopoto who comes out of turn one in the lead after following Belgium's Ken De Dycker and Australia's Michael Byrne into the 180 degree left-hander.

Using the same strategy as in race one Ryan rips apart the competition, ending lap one seven seconds clear of De Dycker before extending the gap to nine, 11, 20 and then 32 seconds. Meanwhile, Tommy Gun's giving the amazing array of British fans something to

yell about by slipping past Burner into third place on lap three – go Tommy! – while his team-mate Noble rolls around for a lap in intense pain to secure 38 points instead of the 50 given for a non-start – well in James!

MX2 world champ Cairoli starts fifth but damages his front wheel – how many times has this happened to Antonio this year? – in a collision with the Aussie Rockstar Suzuki rider. Pitting for a fresh hoop, the Italian speedster rejoins the race and consistently sets the second fastest lap times behind RV on his way to 14th at the flag.

Another rider on a mission to reach the front of the pack is Team America's Timmy Ferry who's not known for his great starting ability and then does a Carmichael – that's crashing on lap one – just to keep things interesting. It takes the entire moto for Red Dog to push from 32nd to fourth and as the chequers is unfurled Timmy's just four seconds back on Tommy who is seven seconds back on Keeno who finishes one minute and five seconds behind Villopoto.

With Villopoto winning both his motos he goes down in the history books as the first 125/MX2/Lites rider to ever do the double. While Steve Lamson and Cairoli have both won the combined little and big bike moto before, Villopoto's the only rider ever to give



Tommy looking happy!



Gareth Swanepoel flies the flag for South Africa



A crash in his opening moto dumps Ricky Carmichael near the back of the field but the GOAT fires back to post 3-1 scores



© Pondo

© Pondo



Go Billy Mac!

A BRIT ABROAD

Our website blogger takes a trip across the pond to sample the MXdN Uncle Sam stylee

Words by Pondo

Americans – they're a funny bunch! By and large they're just as committed and informed as any other motocross fan but they do have some odd ideas. Food, for example – whoever would have thought that battered catfish would make an acceptable trackside snack? Or that dogs would be banned trackside but pigs would be allowed in?

Make no mistake about it, despite the crushing superiority of Team America the des Nations was a great event. Undoubtedly, there were issues – the facilities lacked adequate refreshment stalls, toilets and showers for people staying over the weekend and the traffic looked horrendous. But no event of this size is ever likely to run perfectly from start to finish and none of the problems were unbearable – food, a wee and a wash were all available if you were willing and able to hang on for a bit. In the meantime, the trackside action – while far from being epic in terms of the competitiveness of the event – was truly awesome in terms of the scope of the performances we were seeing. Ryan Villopoto undoubtedly has an illustrious future ahead of him and his two rides on Sunday were absolutely the stuff of legend. It was a shame that no-one was able to step up and meet the challenge of the Americans but also a genuine pleasure and a privilege to see riding on this level.

Trackside the atmosphere was really good – the Brits, of course, displayed their customary enthusiasm in creating an impression on the hosts. Stopping for a breakfast roll on Saturday morning, the butty man commented on our accents – “you guys Brits? Hard to tell you from Kiwis and Aussies”. He would, I ventured, have plenty of practice over the forthcoming weekend as there would be a lot of us at the event. “Uh-huh,” he nodded. “Seen a lot of ‘em already. You guys like getting smashed, huh.” Well, quite...

The level of patriotism was predictably noteworthy but not negatively so. If you look at it in an uncynical way, the level of reverence with which the national anthem was treated was a breath of fresh air compared to, say, the booing and cat-calling during anthems at a big European footie match. And the home fans certainly made an effort for their team – on Saturday morning, during MX1 practice, it was possible to tell from a long way off when Ricky took to the track purely from the noise the fans were making. Speaking of commentary – what on earth possessed them to have a half-English, half-French team on duty on Sunday? As dramatic and lively as French commentary is, it's hard to imagine that there was any more than a very small percentage of the crowd for whom it was of any benefit whatsoever.

Culturally, it was quite an eye-opener. The trade areas were frantic all weekend and rammed on Sunday – with a lack of shops to look at, event t-shirts and the like sold out pretty early. And the queues for the peculiar food stalls were epic – even when selling such delicacies as catfish basket, fried flounder, corn dogs and sunflower seeds, it seemed like the queues were never less than 30 minutes long all weekend. Generally, people seemed to take it well with conversations between strangers breaking out all over the place – it would never happen in England...

And even in the breaks between the races there were plenty of Anglo Saxons to keep the crowd entertained/bemused. One chap, scantily clad in a Welsh flag, entertained with a very fine Angus Young impression before a widely-popular display of bin diving and, of course, the Leprechauns were present for an impromptu track invasion. This year, however, under threat of removal from the circuit, their annual nudity was avoided which was again pretty widely popular. There were Japanese in kimonos, a vast South American contingent, hats made out of beer cartons and a baby pig – generally speaking, a lot of things that you don't normally see at a European motocross meeting.

That, for me, is a big part of what the Motocross des Nations should be – a global gathering of motocross fans, a meeting of cultures and something very different to the comparatively run-of-the-mill GP or AMA National. I liked trying new foods, I liked meeting new people, I liked seeing things I'd never seen before (and surely to god, most of them you would never see anywhere other than at a motocross track...) and I especially liked seeing the GP guys take on the AMA contenders – a meeting of two worlds that only ever happens at this very special event. Sure, there were downsides – but nothing that took away from the significance of the meeting.

There's nothing to touch it as a spectacle – all we need is for the Rest Of The World to step it up and give the Americans a race...





Grant Langston's final race, last lap pass on Steve Ramon hands second to the French



the premier class racers a head-to-head shoeing on a bike with half(ish) the cubic capacity.

"Riding the smaller bike I wanted to have as much of an advantage as possible and made gaps in both motos pretty quickly," explains the 19-year-old. "It really helps knowing you have one of the best bikes prepared by one of the best teams and it made things easy for me."

Ryan's results also make things easy for the rest of the American team with the stars and strippers only needing to place one rider ninth or better in the final moto to take the win. And that's if the currently second-placed French team racers Pierre A Renet and Sebastien Pourcel run 1-2.

So, with the overall pretty much safely in the bag RC and Ferry can afford to take it easy in moto two. Right? Wrong! Carmichael grabs the holeshot with the MX1 world champ Ramon in second, Pourcel third and Ferry fourth. British battlers MacKenzie and Noble are buried deep in the pack with Noble toughing it out for six laps this time to eventually get credited with 32nd and instantly shaving six points from Team GB's total – five rides from six count remember.

Billy Mac's ride after a first lap fall with Chad Reed is epic. In 23rd at the end of lap one the freshly crowned British MX1 champ pulls his usual move of riding oh-so much sweeter in the second moto.

Keeping the throttle lit to the very end, Mac 211 barely misses out on stealing seventh at the flag from Japan's Yoshi Atsuta after doing De Dycker, ex-Dixon Yamaha team-mate Julien Bill and Seb Pourcel in the very last gasps of the 30-minute plus two lap moto.

At the front Carmichael steers well clear of the competition with Ferry working his way up to second while AMA Motocross champ Grant Langston plucks third from Ramon who "just got tired" after finding "Ricky was just too fast to catch" in the opening laps.

With the win most definitely in the bag for Team USA a quick points count shows that Langston's last lap pass on Ramon gives the French second spot, one point clear of the Belgians with Italy fourth and Great Britain a fine fighting fifth – all-in-all pretty bloody good going considering Noble's injured shoulder.

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*Tommy Searle survives a
Chad Reed take-out move to
lead the Brits home in a
fighting fifth*

NOTES FROM AMERICA...

Pluck of the Irish!

With perennial team leader Gordon Crockard out of the troop with a shattered shoulder the Irish team of Tommy Merton, Martin Barr and Wayne Garrett arrive at Budds Creek just hoping to qualify for the 20-team main event.

After making it through the qualifying round in 14th position the boys ride out of their skins to go one place higher on the day that really counts. While it's Merton and Garrett who tough it out to finish in the latter half of the 20s giving the team a solid base it's Barr who rides a blinder to run 20-9 in his motos.

Missing luggage!

Almost every major European team were stressing about missing bikes come Saturday morning practice as the Italian team had – or so it's rumoured – messed up big style by trying to import foodstuffs (wine, pasta and mozzarella – no doubt sniffed out by a customs cheesehound) into the country along with their race bikes.

Despite Italian team boss Andrea Bartolini claiming "it is a problem of the paperwork with Alitalia", few believed it as it's not the first time the Italian team's equipment has been impounded at overseas MXdNs. Eventually all the bikes – including Tommy Searle's factory KTM – do arrive just as the first practice session begins.

Curse of the Kiwis continues

After finishing a fine third last year at Matterley, Team New Zealand – even without Josh Coppins – start the event as favourites for another podium place. But all that goes to pot when neither Ben Townley or Daryl Hurley make it through their practice sessions without injury.

Although BT is ready to rip in his qualifier after performing a fine Superman impression over the top of Henry's Hill, there's little point after Hurley brains himself and is prohibited to start any further sessions by the track doctor. As it turns out Hurley isn't the only Kiwi with a banging head come Monday morning after BT and the boys cut it loose on Sunday night's THOR party.

First Lady!

Tarah Geiger – who is Puerto Rico's best looking motocross racer by far – became the first female competitor in the 61-year history of the MXdN. The feisty 20-year-old unfortunately faltered in her qualifying heat but bounced back strong in the B-Final – won by Brazil – to beat off some stiff competition.

Red or Dead?

Everyone figured Team USA would be a gaggle of gingers at Budds Creek but RC rocked up with a somewhat darker do than normal! "I actually died it brown for Millville and nobody noticed," claims RC. "So I did it darker and really ****ed it up!"

Despite not running the red, RC and the ginger gang still do the business amassing only one point more than the bare minimum MXdN score of seven!



James Noble soaks up the pain of a dislocated shoulder



With no GC on the team, Marty Barr steps up to the plate with a captain's innings

For more redheaded riders and redneck fans - plus other assorted MX des images - check out the gallery at www.dirtbikerider.com



Results

Team Standings

1	USA	8 points
2	France	34
3	Belgium	35
4	Italy	57
5	Great Britain	63
6	Spain	68
7	Japan	77
8	Switzerland	84
9	Germany	89
10	Canada	90



Letter from America

Half-cut Happy Snapper!

Did anyone else get this shot of RC going down? If so I bet they didn't do it with a £99 camera after drinking five cans of Coors Light.

Justin, Worcestershire



Michael Brown's a late call-up to Team GB after Shaun Morris is on the receiving end of a freak workshop injury



SPAIN AGAIN!

The Spanish armada dominates the Trial des Nations as Great Britain slip to third behind Japan

Words by g2r.co.uk Photos by Eric Kitchen

HAVING TAKEN good note of the spanking that the Yanks dished out to the European MX boys, the Spanish trials squad deliver a similar sweet beating to other countries that dare to line up against them at the 2007 Trial des Nations held on the Isle of Man at the end of September.

The highly-favoured quartet of Toni Bou, Adam Raga, Albert Cabestany and Jeroni Fajardo do not disappoint and produce one of the best performances this inter-countries competition has seen since its inception back in 1984.

Dripping in champagne Raga is keen to talk. "Today we have showed our true level. The trial was a little easy but still our first lap was very special. We made some mistakes on the second lap but still our margin of victory was a very comfortable one. As a team we have worked well together which sometimes can be difficult as we are normally rivals."

A full 19 four-man teams – nine in the top world category and 10 in the supporting International Trophy class – from as far afield as Japan and America and as diverse as Latvia and Belgium make the journey to the Isle of Man to do battle in the 24th edition of the prestigious event.

With a loss of just seven marks for all four riders for the entire trial, their winning margin of 32 marks over shock runners up Japan confirms the superiority of Spain's star-studded line-up with all four members

currently ranked in the world's top six. The challenge from team Great Britain – who are riding with the advantage of being on home soil – never materializes and in fact fades badly during the closing lap to allow Japan to sneak in front of them in the final order.

Japan's captain Takahisa Fujinami can't hide his delight. "This is a great result for us and the best we could have hoped for as Spain were just too strong for all of us. To beat Britain on their home ground is a good achievement."

The first three teams home reinforce their elite status in the modern era of the sport with the once mighty French and Italian squads finishing in fourth and fifth places respectively but embarrassingly well off any hope of a podium position.

Since the early days when France won four of the first five TdNs (only interrupted by Italy), Spain have made the event very much their own with this latest victory taking their tally to an incredible 14 wins in the last 17 years. Great Britain hold the formidable honour of being the only nation to defeat the mighty Spanish during this period with red, white and blue triumphs in 1997, 2002 and 2003. Nostalgically, it was on the Isle of Man a decade ago that Dougie Lampkin, Graham Jarvis, Steve Colley and Dan Clark recorded that famous first British success.

Just two members of the 1997 team remain with the aging duo of



Lampkin and Jarvis joined by the emerging talent of James Dabill and recently crowned World Junior Champion Michael Brown. Brown is a late addition to the squad when a freak workshop accident a week prior to the event leaves Shaun Morris with a serious eye injury. Despite this cruel and unexpected change of personnel, on paper the mixture of experience and youth plus a great wedge of home advantage puts Team GB as the only threat to Spain's continued reign.

The seafront from the capital town of Douglas to the adjoining dwelling of Onchan, that now boast both Lampkin and Colley as residents, has changed much since the trial world championship last visited in 2002. Trendy apartments and new glass-fronted commercial buildings which house the many financial companies that have landed in the last 10 years or so nestle among the traditional B&Bs that welcome 80,000 road race fans each year. However, despite the differing infrastructure the TdN course follows a familiar and similar route to five years ago.

After leaving the famous TT Grandstand, the riders head to the first section at Governors Dip. From here there are two further hazards in Groulle Glen before the action breaks cover onto the dramatic coastline which is home to some of the best trials terrain on the planet. The bulk of the crowd gathers at the four spectacular sections at Howstrake before they follow the top teams through the White City and onto the



He may have lost his world individual title but Adam Raga still gets a share of the team crown



Fujigas leads his team to a shock second place ahead of GB

*Dougie's gutted to see
his team finish third*

Results

World championship

1	Spain	7
2	Japan	39
3	Great Britain	45
4	France	127
5	Italy	131
6	United States	274
7	Germany	325
8	Sweden	349
9	Ireland	409

International Trophy

1	Belgium	164
2	Norway	198
3	Australia	230
4	Switzerland	284
5	Netherlands	300

awesome rock wall at Port Jack. A man-made log section on the prom and two further artificial rock hazards back in front of the TT tower complete the lap of 18 sections that have to be ridden twice within the monster time limit of seven hours.

With the severity set to suit the wide range of abilities, the trial is always going to be at the easy end of the spectrum for the world's best. However, no-one expects Spain's total annihilation of hazards that sees the mighty foursome remain unpenalised on the first lap with the best three scores counting in each section. Great Britain do their best to remain in contention with a respectable total of 16, just three marks less than Japan. The Spanish victory is almost guaranteed with a lap still to go and holding a clear lead, Bou, Raga, Cabestany and Fajardo ease up slightly to come home with an incredible final tally of a mere seven marks.

Time penalties and tiring performances see the home boys lose out on second place as the 2004 world champion Takahisa Fujinami rallies his Japanese troops to deliver an improved second lap score that takes them

to a well deserved runners up spot.

Lampkin's pretty dejected at the end. "We have given 100 per cent today but it just hasn't been our day. Spain were always going to win but we should have really been second with all the great home support we have had today and throughout the weekend. We had high expectations that have ended in disappointment."

The scale and divide between the nations in this top class is graphically illustrated by Ireland's traumatic day that ends with a score of 409 marks and a distant last place. Happily for the Irish riders this means that they will return to the support category for 2008 having been promoted as a direct result of winning the International Trophy last year.

The International Trophy is won this time around by Belgium who last claimed this title back in 1999. The squad of Jan Cardinaels, Maxim Mathy, Jordan Vandekastele and Michael Vukcevic fend off the challenge of Norway and Australia who finish second and third as reward for their long journeys.



LADIES FIRST!

British threesome defend women's title

The British women's squad throw down the gauntlet for their male counterparts as they successfully defend the title they dramatically won in France 12 months ago. The all-conquering dream team of Maria Conway, Rebecca Cook and Donna Fox dominate the ladies' team event from start to finish and come home 13 marks clear of Germany to become the first nation in this category to record back-to-back wins.

Great Britain now join Germany and Spain with two victories apiece in the Women's Trial Des Nations with Norway being the only other country to grab a win in the eight years since the female division was added to the previously male-only competition. Unlike last year, the British girls begin as favourites with the trio boasting real strength in depth compared to their main rivals Germany and Spain.

This quality is reinforced as Cook, Fox and Conway place third, fourth and fifth respectively in the final round of the women's individual championship that takes place the day prior to the team trial. In this prior encounter Germany's captain Iris Kramer creates a massive upset as she defeats seven-time women's world champ Laia Sanz by a single mark.

This shock result seems to distract both the new and former champion for contrasting reasons and maybe weakens their focus on the combined challenge that lies ahead.

Rain during the hours of darkness brings a slippery start to the British defence but despite the tricky conditions and added pressure of being odds-on favourites, the home girls show no signs of nerves and attack right from the off. A slip at section six, where Germany go one mark better than their British rivals, is the only slight mistake in a commanding first lap that sees the 2006 winners finish the first lap seven marks clear of the field.

The ever present wind dries the sections for the second lap with all the top four teams recording improved scores. Great Britain produces the biggest improvement with a victory-confirming performance of just five marks to take the title for the second year in a row.

"To win on home soil is very special," explains Maria, "as the support throughout the trial has been incredible. We came here with a lot of pressure as we were expected to win, especially after yesterday's results. Out of the two victories this has been the most difficult as I think it was easier to win it when we were not favourites than to come here in front of our home fans and defend it."

Results

Women's Cup

1	Great Britain	16
2	Germany	29
3	France	40
4	Spain	44
5	Norway	99

Donna Fox helps the British ladies retain their TdN title

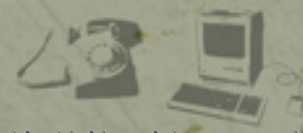


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IT'S A WRAP...

ELITE YOUTH CUP, MXY2 AND BSMA SERIES SIGN
OFF AT CULHAM, PONTRILAS AND LITTLE SILVER



Lewis Toombs hits the eject button at Culham

Danny Lanfear gets off to a flyer



David Games is the inaugural Elite Youth Cup 125cc champ

IT'S A WRAP...

...NEARLY! MIKE GURNEY FILLS US IN ON THE GRAND FINALES OF THREE OF THE FIVE MAJOR NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS...

With all five major youth national series hurtling towards a conclusion it's bound to be the time of year where some riders hold their nerve, some don't and Lady Luck has a big say in the destination of this year's prized silverware.

ELITE YOUTH CUP

There is certainly drama aplenty at the final round of the Elite Youth Cup at Culham. Going into the final race of the Open class, Mel Pocock and Matt Moffat are both in with a chance of lifting the title. While Mel gets away to a clean start with Kristian Whately appearing to ride shotgun for him Matt gets himself tangled up with a fallen Lewis Rose, then involved in a bit of argy bargo with Scott Elderfield and Mel goes on his merry way to lift the Open class title oblivious to the shenanigans going on behind him.

Next up are the 125s and surely Lewis Tombs has to win the title with a commanding points lead over David Games... Enter Lady Luck – but not for Lewis – as the petrol cap on his KTM works loose spewing fuel over Lewis' pride and joy and I'm not talking about his KTM!

Lewis is forced to pull out in agony with petrol burning into him and losing concentration he ditches the machine at the end of a Culham

straight and David Games gratefully accepts a title snatched from Lewis in the unluckiest of ways.

Then to top it all the Big Wheel 85s take to the stage with a winner-takes-all race between James Hutchinson and Richie Worrall. Richie all season riding like a guy possessed gets himself back in contention with a great performance over the weekend and looks to have it in the bag as he leads from a distant Honda 150-mounted Hutchinson.

But as James turns the screw he carves his way to the front, puts a blistering passing manoeuvre on Richie right in front of the crowd to regain the title lead only to bail out in the same spot as Lewis Tombs with another championship biting the dust in the Culham braking bumps. If it's any consolation James it was possibly the best race of the season...

After that it's pretty dull really (only joking)! Jamie McCanney does enough over the weekend to lift the Small Wheel 85cc crown as Scott Aldridge puts in his best performance of the season. And little Ben Watson – surely a candidate for youth rider of the season – takes another clean sweep of wins to go home with the Junior 65 trophy with Corrie Southwood finishing in a hard-fought second place overall.

MX2

With the EYC silverware sorted it's over to Pontrilas to see who will be the first ever winner of the new MXY2 trophy? With Alex Rockwell out injured the fight is surely between series leader Lewis King and 15-year-old Graeme Irwin from Northern Ireland with just two points between them. Ross Hill and Jack Hawes still have a mathematical chance of winning but it's always going to be a big ask with so many points to make up.

In race one, Lady Luck seems to intervene twice as Graeme Irwin goes down in an opening lap pile-up and restarts dead last. Advantage Lewis you would have thought but Lewis – already struggling with busted goggles and a flat engined Kawasaki – is going backwards. The two guys meet up mid-race and after a close look at each other and a bit of jousting it's Irwin who goes on to finish in 10th place with Lewis back in 17th place.

Mel Pocock takes the race win with a stonking ride through from the back to overpower a rapid Ben Field on the Relentless Suzuki.

The final race of the series and Jack Hawes takes the race win in some comfort after Fields' Suzuki loses its drive. All Graeme Irwin has to do is stay in front of Lewis and that's exactly what



Hardly a small entry...



Lewis King just misses out on the MX2 crown



More Lewis Toombs – this time after his switch to Dixon Yamaha



Ben Pearson winds up his 150F at Little Silver



Liam Knight lifts the BSMA Junior 65cc crown



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With winter just around the corner we figured it'd be fun to blast back to the blue skies of summer to find our latest winner of a Rob Herring training day. And the big winner this month is Joe Sansom from Devon whose mum Kirsty shot this picture of Joe practising his jumps.

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he does – finishing second with Lewis in third in a pretty uneventful race.

Uneventful apart from a rampaging Pocock who unluckily crashes out dislodging a shoulder and collecting broken bones too I believe – possibly a costly end to Mel's season with both Masters and BYMX titles still within his sights.

At the end of the day though Irish eyes are smiling as the trophy goes across the water to Carrickfergus in the hands of young gun Graeme Irwin.

BSMA

After something of a difficult season (just don't mention the rain) for the BSMA's 'Best of British' campaign it is really good to see such high spirits and an upbeat atmosphere for the final round.

Liam Knight looks like a certainty to lift the Junior 65cc title now that early season favourite Corrie Southwood has missed vital rounds through injury and so it proves with a stylish performance – three race wins and a well earned national title. Taylor Vernon does his sponsorship hopes for next season no harm at all with second in the final standings.

In a head-to-head for the Small Wheel 85cc title Dan Thornhill gets the better of Josh Brine

in what has been a close and competitive class with a polished, mature performance.

Josh Spinks and Connor Walkley are the only tickets in town for the BW crown and while Josh powers the Redline KTM to glory with three race wins it's Connor who has everyone talking with his last gasp, do-or-die final bend victory over Aaron Jenner in the very last race of this year's series.

Lewis Trickett arrives at Little Silver knowing he just has to stay on the bike, finish races and the 125cc Senior title will be his. By Saturday night the champagne is cracked as Lewis posts two third place finishes – more than enough to celebrate.

David Games with an awesome performance catches the eye out on the track but a seized up PAR Honda in race two robs him of the overall win on the weekend – that honour goes to Lewis Tombs now sporting the blue colours aboard a Dixon Yamaha.

Josh Waterman has been in a class of his own all season in the 250 Senior event and apart from guest support rider Ben Field who takes three race wins Josh is little troubled as he cruises to the title in front of Jamie Smith in second and Charlie Evans who's third in the final championship table.

FAST FEMMIES!

GIRLS GO WILD AT BRITAIN'S BIGGEST GATHERING OF FAST AND FILTHY FEMALE TALENT

Photos by Ray Smith/actionsport.co.uk

With only three riders less than at last year's UK Girl's National – c'mon girls where were you? – there's no denying that the Portsmouth club promoted event is still the biggest and best gathering of female motocross talent in the British Isles. Held at the spectacular Foxholes circuit near Salisbury, 179 female racers put on a real show in the eight classes for six to 65-year-olds. For more information on this event and full results check out www.ukgirlsnational.co.uk

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KING BILLY!

MAC LIFTS THE BRITISH MX1 TITLE, GETS CAUGHT UP IN A FOOD FIGHT AND THEN REPRESENTS HIS COUNTRY AT THE MXDN - ALL IN (JUST OVER) A WEEK'S WORK FOR A PROFESSIONAL RACER



I SAID it was over last time but this time it really is!

The main focus has been on the world championship all year so when it finished it kinda felt like there was nothing left to think about – in a way it took the pressure off for the final few races although the last two were the most important for me.

Leading up to the British championship I was s****ing myself – I was thinking about it way too much, partly because I've been in that situation before and last time it went tits up so the week leading up I done everything I could to make sure I didn't miss a heartbeat. I even had things that were trying to stop me from getting my work done, like when my old faithful practice bike (Scarlet) slipped the gear shaft off the selector. So I called Stevie G at Kawasaki and ordered a new gear shaft hoping that would fix the problem.

The boys came through and it arrived under 12 hours later so I then drove a couple of hours north to the LPE workshop where Steve Henderson helped me out and fixed it for me. Thanks Hendo! But time was running out in the day and I was getting more and more agitated about not being able to complete my motos – man I didn't even have a track to ride and it was 4pm!

Luckily the guy from LPE has a small supercross track nearby – it wasn't even a minute-a-lap but it was a cool little track and I pounded out two 35-minute motos even if I was a little dizzy by the end. Hendo was there the whole time telling me my times and stuff so Hendo I'm truly grateful mate!

After all the preparation that week I arrived at the race a little nervous but I told myself there was no way I was gonna lose this championship again! I arrived at the track and was immediately taken away with Dougan. We drove down to the nearest town for some food but the only place that took our fancy was a chippy! So there we both were, sat in the chippy knocking back some sausage, chips and beans with plenty of brown sauce! Hey it musta worked though, check out our results the next day. Chippy is the new race diet – I've told you all before!

Qualifying was going bad. I was trying too much and kept making mistakes, then the track was quite busy as there were a lot of riders and I had to abort a couple of laps but the mood I was in I wasn't gonna accept anything other than pole. I hit the last lap perfect and went a second-and-a-half ahead of Ken which is pretty damn good cos big Kenneth can hang a lap out! I then pulled the best two starts in my life, even watching back on the video there wasn't one thing I done wrong. I got out front and put in some hard laps to get the gap. I had it sitting comfortably at about eight seconds but then I made a big mistake before the whoops and hacked my way through them like a right helmet!

By the time I got to the next corner I looked over and Ken was there, only about three seconds behind. I got nervous and pumped up, I held him off for a while but I heard him come down the inside so I let him past – I knew if I finished behind him it was good enough but as I let him past he started riding about four seconds a lap slower. I thought 'just stay behind him till a lap to go and go at it with him' but we were going so slow that Tanel caught us up at rapid pace, passed us both and went on for the win. Tanel done me a huge favour and Ken only got two points on me instead of three.

The second race was like clockwork for Kawasaki. Tanel stayed behind me the whole way till we had enough distance over the other guys. Ken was well down so when we seen we had enough space Tanel went past as he was easily riding faster than me and went on for the win. The last lap I knew I had it but I was still nervous but I got over it and managed a fist pump on the small table top!

It was more relief than anything just to finally have won it! I was so pleased for Kawasaki – CAS has been at the top of the British for a while and I really wanted to take it off them for Kawasaki! Stevie G has been chasing that title for as long as me it seems – last time they won it was 1996 I got told so here ya go Steve, glad I could be of assistance!

Party time! The race was on Saturday so everyone stayed over for a party and it was brilliant! The beer tent was open, the mechanical sheep was in full flow and everyone was celebrating with a touch of alcohol! We had a good crew that night which consisted of me, Bry, Stevie, Brad and Hayley, Dougan, Deano, Chris Black and Ricky Lockhart and a load more! It started off in the Motovision awning where the boys hooked everyone up with some proper good grub, drinks and music and then from there we all moved to the beer tent where Tommy's aunty Julie was buying me drinks – thanks Julie! Me and Brad were drinking partners which wasn't very sensible on my part – we all know how wild Brad is and I ended up dancing my ass off with some woman's sunglasses on in the dark beer tent!

When we were all pretty done-in and hungry we went back to big Al's camper for the leftovers of his BBQ. We were all chowing down on some sausages when a potato hit me in the head – it was Mike Foster who was the culprit. I threw a sausage back at him and with that Al got up and shouted at the top of his voice FOOD FIGHT! It was like something off a cartoon, food was going everywhere! We emptied sauce bottles, juice bottles, the lot – it was awesome!

From there it was on the plane and over to the Nations. Not that exciting to be honest – we were on our best behaviour. However, we did add some excitement to the press conference! We arrived there at 3pm but had to wait three hours before we got to the mics – we were all pretty grumpy and hungry leading up to it so we set ourselves the task of slipping a random word into our answers to the questions we got asked! My word was 'gerbil', Tommy's was 'merkin' (look it up!), James' was 'bell' and Mark's was 'helmet'! Easy used it like this 'yeah the boys are up for it, they are just gonna go out there and give it some helmet'! We barely got through the interviews but to be honest I think it cheered everyone up in the room – we were the only team laughing and joking, everyone else just looked pissed off they had to be there as the only people the media were interested in were the Americans!

The weekend didn't go to plan for us. James injured himself in practice and I had trouble setting my bike up for the track – I pumped up really bad in the first race and crashed at the start of the second but Tommy done really well for us! Overall we ended up fifth thanks to James completing a certain amount of laps. I was impressed with America and I defo wanna race there in 2010 so we'll see how things go over here before that time.

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